"SAVE FILM! HELP WIN THE WAR!"

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PARAMOUNT STUDIO - HOLLYWOOD

DOUBLE INDEMNITY

Billy Wilder
Raymond Chandler
September 25, 1943

CAST

WALTER NEFF.....FRED MacMURRAY

PHYLLIS DIETRICHSON.....BARBARA STANWYCK

BARTON KEYES.....EDWARD G. ROBINSON

LOLA DIETRICHSON.....JEAN HEATHER

MR. DIETRICHSON.....TOM POWERS

NINO ZACHETTE.....BYRON BARR

MR. NORTON.....RICHARD GAINES

MR. JACKSON.....PORTER HALL

SAM GORLOPIS.....FORTUNIO BONANOVA

* * *

SEQUENCE "A"

FADE IN:

A-1 LOS ANGELES - A DOWNTOWN INTERSECTION

It is night, about two o'clock, very light traffic.

At the left and in the immediate foreground a semaphore traffic signal stands at GO. Approaching it at about thirty miles per hour is a Dodge 1938 coupe. It is driven erratically and weaving a little, but not out of control.

When the car is about forty feet away, the signal changes to STOP. Car makes no attempt to stop but comes on through.

A-2 A LIGHT NEWSPAPER TRUCK

is crossing the intersection at right angles. It swerves and skids to avoid the Dodge, which goes on as though nothing had happened. The truck stops with a panicky screech of tires. There is a large sign on the truck: "READ THE LOS ANGELES TIMES". The truck driver's infuriated face stares after the coupe.

A-3 THE COUPE

continues along the street, still weaving, then slows down and pulls over towards the curb in front of a tall office building.

A-4 THE COUPE

stops. The headlights are turned off. For a second nothing happens, then the car door opens slowly. A man eases himself out onto the sidewalk and stands a moment leaning on the open door to support himself. He's a tall man, about thirty-five years old. From the way he moves there seems to be something wrong with his left shoulder.

He straightens up and painfully lowers his left hand into his jacket pocket. He leans into the car. He brings out a light-weight overcoat and drapes it across his shoulders. He shuts the car door and walks toward the building.

A-5 ENTRANCE OF THE BUILDING

Above the closed, double-plate glass doors is lettered: "PACIFIC BUILDING". To the left of entrance there is a drugstore, closed, dark except for a faint light in the back. The man comes stiffly up to the doors. (CAMERA HAS MOVED UP WITH HIM). He tries the doors. They are locked. He knocks on the glass. Inside, over his shoulder, the lobby of the building is visible: a side entrance to the drugstore on the left, in the rear a barber shop and cigar and magazine stand closed up for the night, and to the right two elevators. One elevator is open and its dome light falls across the dark lobby.

A-5 (Cont'd)

The man knocks again. The night watchman sticks his head out of the elevator and looks toward entrance. He comes out with a newspaper in one hand and a half-eaten sandwich in the other. He finishes the sandwich on the way to the doors, looks out and recognizes the man outside, unlocks the door and pulls it open.

NIGHT WATCHMAN: Hello there, Mr. Neff.

Neff walks in past him without answering.

A-6 INT. LOBBY

Neff is walking towards elevator. Night watchman looks after him, relocks door, follows to elevator. Neff enters elevator.

A-7 ELEVATOR

Neff stands leaning against wall. He is pale and haggard with pain, but deadpans as night watchman joins him.

NIGHT WATCHMAN: Working pretty late aren't you, Mr. Neff?

NEFF: (Tight-lipped) Late enough.

NIGHT WATCHMAN: You look kind of all in at that.

NEFF: I'm fine. Let's ride.

Night watchman pulls lever, doors close and elevator rises.

NIGHT WATCHMAN: How's the insurance business, Mr. Neff?

NEFF: Okay.

NIGHT WATCHMAN: They wouldn't ever sell me any. They say I've got something loose in my heart. I say it's rheumatism.

NEFF: (Scarcely listening) Uh-huh.

Night watchman looks around at him, turns away again and the elevator stops.

NIGHT WATCHMAN: (Surly) Twelve.

A-7 (Cont'd)

The door opens. Across a small dark reception room a pair of frosted glass doors are lettered: PACIFIC ALL-RISK INSURANCE COMPANY - FOUNDED 1906 - MAIN OFFICE. There is a little light beyond the glass doors.

Neff straightens up and walks heavily out of the elevator, across reception room to doors. He pushes them open. The night watchman stares after him morosely, works lever, elevator doors start to close.

A-8 TWELFTH FLOOR INSURANCE OFFICE

(Note for set-designer: Our Insurance Company occupies the entire eleventh and twelfth floors of the building. On the twelfth floor are the executive offices and claims and sales departments. These all open off a balcony which runs all the way around. From the balcony you see the eleventh floor below: one enormous room filled with desks, typewriters, filing cabinets, business machines, etc.)

Neff comes through the double entrance doors from the reception room. The twelfth floor is dark. Some light shines up from the eleventh floor. Neff takes a few steps then holds on to the balcony railing and looks down.

A-9 THE ELEVENTH FLOOR FROM ABOVE - NEFF'S POINT OF VIEW

Two colored women are cleaning the offices. One is dry-mopping the floor, the other is moving chairs back into position, etc. A colored man is emptying waste baskets into a big square box. He shuffles a little dance step as he moves, and hums a little tune.

A-10 NEFF

Moves away from the railing with a faint smile on his face, and walks past two or three offices (CAMERA WITH HIM) towards a glass door with number twenty-seven on it and three names: HENRY B. ANDERSON, WALTER NEFF, LOUIS L. SCHWARTZ. Neff opens the door.

A-11 INT. NEFF'S OFFICE - DARK

Three desks, filing cabinets, one typewriter on stand, one dictaphone on fixed stand against wall with rack of records underneath, telephones on all three desks. Water cooler with inverted bottle and paper cup holder beside it. Two windows facing toward front of building. Venetian blinds. No curtains. Waste basket full, ash trays not emptied. The office has not been cleaned.

Neff enters, switches on desk lamp. He looks across at dictaphone, goes heavily to it and lifts off the fabric cover. He leans down hard on the dictaphone stand as if feeling faint. He turns away from dictaphone, takes a few uncertain steps and falls heavily into a swivel chair. His head goes far back, his

A-11 (Cont'd)

eyes r'ose, cold sweat shows on his face. For a moment he stays like this, exhausted, then his eyes open slowly and look down at his left shoulder. His good hand flips the overcoat back, he unbuttons his jacket, loosens his tie and shirt. This was quite an effort. He rests for a second, breathing hard. With the help of his good hand he edges his left elbow up on the arm-rest of the chair, supports it there and then pulls his jacket wide. A heavy patch of dark blood shows on his shirt. He pushes his chair along the floor towards the water cooler, using his feet and his right hand against the desk, takes out a handkerchief, presses with his hand against the spring faucet of the cooler, soaks the handkerchief in water and tucks it, dripping wet, against the wound inside his shirt. Next, he gets a handful of water and splashes it on his face. The water runs down his chin and drips. He breathes heavily, with closed eyes. He fingers a pack of cigarettes in his shirt pocket, pulls it out, looks at it. There is blood on it. He wheels himself back to the desk and dumps the loose cigarettes out of the packet. Some are blood-stained, a few are clean. He takes one, puts it between his lips, gropes around for a match, lights cigarette. He takes a deep drag and lets smoke out through his nose.

He pulls himself toward dictaphone again, still in the swivel chair, reaches it, lifts the horn off the bracket and the dictaphone makes a low buzzing sound. He presses the button switch on the horn. The sound stops, the record revolves on the cylinder. He begins to speak:

NEFF: Office memorandum, Walter Neff to Barton Keyes, Claims Manager. Los Angeles, July 16th, 1938. Dear Keyes: I suppose you'll call this a confession when you hear it. I don't like the word confession. I just want to set you right about one thing you couldn't see, because it was smack up against your nose. You think you're such a hot potato as a claims manager, such a wolf on a phoney claim. Well, maybe you are, Keyes, but let's take a look at this Dietrichson claim, Accident and Double Indemnity. You were pretty good in there for a while, all right. You said it wasn't an accident. Check. You said it wasn't suicide. Check. You said it was murder. Check and double check. You thought you had it cold, all wrapped up in tissue paper, with pink ribbons around it. It was perfect, except that it wasn't, because you made a mistake, just one tiny little mistake. When it came to picking the killer, you picked the wrong

(Continued)

A-11 (Cont'd)

NEFF: (Cont'd)
guy, if you know what I mean. Want to know who killed Dietrichson? Hold tight to that cheap cigar of yours, Keyes. I killed Dietrichson. Me, Walter Neff, insurance agent, 35 years old, unmarried, no visible scars -
(He glances down at his wounded shoulder)
until a little while ago, that is. Yes, I killed him. I killed him for money - and a woman - and I didn't get the money and I didn't get the woman. Pretty, isn't it?

He interrupts the dictation, lays down the horn on the desk. He takes his lighted cigarette from the ash tray, puffs it two or three times, and kills it. He picks up the horn again.

NEFF:
(His voice is now quiet and contained)
It began last May. About the end of May, it was. I had to run out to Glendale to deliver a policy on some dairy trucks. On the way back I remembered this auto renewal on Los Feliz. So I decided to run over there.

As he goes on speaking,

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

A-12 DIETRICHSON HOME - LOS FELIZ DISTRICT

Palm trees line the street, middle-class houses, mostly in Spanish style. Some kids throwing a baseball back and forth across a couple of front lawns. An ice cream wagon dawdles along the block. Neff's coupe meets and passes the ice cream wagon and stops before one of the Spanish houses. Neff gets out.

He carries a briefcase, his hat is a little on the back of his head. His movements are easy and full of ginger. He inspects the house, checks the number, goes up on the front porch and rings the bell.

NEFF'S VOICE

It was mid-afternoon, and it's funny, I can still remember the smell of honeysuckle all along that block. I felt like a million. There was no way in all this world I could have known that murder sometimes can smell like honeysuckle.....

A-13 EXT. DIETRICHSON HOME - ENTRANCE DOOR

Neff rings the bell again and waits. The door opens. A maid, about forty-five, rather slatternly, opens the door.

NEFF: Mr. Dietrichson in?

MAID: Who wants to see him?

NEFF: The name is Neff. Walter Neff.

MAID: If you're selling something---

NEFF: Look, it's Mr. Dietrichson I'd like to talk to, and it's not magazine subscriptions.

He pushes past her into the house.

A-14 HALLWAY - DIETRICHSON HOME

Spanish craperoo in style, as is the house throughout. A wrought-iron staircase curves down from the second floor. A fringed Mexican shawl hangs down over the landing. A large tapestry hangs on the wall. Downstairs, the dining room to one side, living room on the other side visible through a wide archway. All of this, architecture, furniture, decorations, etc., is genuine early Leo Carrillo period. Neff has edged his way in past maid who still holds the door open.

MAID: Listen, Mr. Dietrichson's not in.

NEFF: How soon do you expect him?

MAID: He'll be home when he gets here, if that's any help to you.

At this point a voice comes from the top of the stairs.

VOICE: What is it, Nettie? Who is it?

Neff looks up.

A-15 UPPER LANDING OF STAIRCASE - (FROM BELOW)

Phyllis Dietrichson stands looking down. She is in her early thirties. She holds a large bath-towel around her very appetizing torso, down to about two inches above her knees. She wears no stockings, no nothing. On her feet a pair of high-heeled bedroom slippers with pom-poms. On her left ankle a gold anklet.

MAID'S VOICE: It's for Mr. Dietrichson.

A-15 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: (Looking down at Neff)
I'm Mrs. Dietrichson. What is it?

A-16 SHOOTING DOWN FROM UPPER LANDING

Neff looks up, takes his hat off.

NEFF: How do you do, Mrs. Dietrichson.
I'm Walter Neff, Pacific All-Risk.

A-17 PHYLLIS

PHYLLIS: Pacific all-what?

A-18 NEFF

NEFF: Pacific All-Risk Insurance Company.
It's about some renewals on the automobiles, Mrs. Dietrichson. I've been trying to contact your husband for the past two weeks. He's never at his office.

A-19 PHYLLIS

PHYLLIS: Is there anything I can do?

A-20 NEFF

NEFF: The insurance ran out on the fifteenth.
I'd hate to think of your getting a smashed fender or something while you're not fully covered.

A-21 PHYLLIS

She glances over her towel costume.

PHYLLIS: (With a little smile)
Perhaps I know what you mean, Mr. Neff. I've just been taking a sun bath.

A-22 NEFF

NEFF: No pigeons around, I hope . . .About those policies, Mrs. Dietrichson -- I hate to take up your time --

A-23 PHYLLIS

PHYLLIS: That's all right. If you can wait till I put something on, I'll be right down.
Nettie, show Mr. Neff into the living room.

A-23 (Cont'd)

She turns away as gracefully as one can with a towel for a wrapper.

A-24 ENTRANCE HALL

Neff watches Phyllis out of sight. He speaks to the maid while still looking up.

NEFF: Where would the living room be?

MAID: In there, but they keep the liquor locked up.

NEFF: That's okay. I always carry my own keys.

He goes through the archway. Maid goes off the other way.

A-25 LIVING ROOM

Neff comes into the room and throws his briefcase on the plush davenport and tosses his hat on top of it. He looks around the room, then moves over to a baby grand piano with a sleazy Spanish shawl dangling down one side and two cabinet photographs standing in a staggered position on top. Neff glances them over: Mr. Dietrichson, age about fifty-one, a big, blocky man with glasses and a Rotarian look about him; Lola Dietrichson, age nineteen, wearing a filmy party dress and a yearning look in her pretty eyes. Neff walks away from the piano and takes a few steps back and forth across the rug. His eyes fall on a wrinkled corner. He carefully straightens it out with his foot. His back is to the archway as he hears high heels clicking on the staircase. He turns and looks through the arch.

NEFF'S VOICE

The living room was still stuffy from last night's cigars. The windows were closed and the sunshine coming in through the Venetian blinds showed up the dust in the air. The furniture was kind of corny and old-fashioned, but it had a comfortable look, as if people really sat in it. On the piano, in couple of fancy frames, were Mr. Dietrichson and Lola, his daughter by his first wife. They had a bowl of those little red goldfish on the table behind the davenport, but, to tell you the truth, Keyes, I wasn't a whole lot interested in goldfish right then, nor in auto renewals, nor in Mr. Dietrichson and his daughter Lola. I was thinking about that dame upstairs, and the way she had looked at me, and I wanted to see her again, close, without that silly staircase between us.

A-26 STAIRCASE (FROM NEFF'S POINT OF VIEW)

Phyllis Dietrichson is coming downstairs. First we see her feet, with pompom slippers and the gold anklet on her left ankle. CAMERA PULLS BACK SLOWLY as she descends, until we see all of her. She is wearing a pale blue summer dress.

(Continued)

A-26 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS'
VOICE: I wasn't long, was I?

NEFF'S
VOICE: Not at all, Mrs. Dietrichson.

CAMERA PULLS BACK WITH HER INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

PHYLLIS: I hope I've got my face on straight.

NEFF: It's perfect for my money.

PHYLLIS: (Crossing to the mirror over the fireplace)
Won't you sit down, Mr. -- Neff is the name, isn't it?

NEFF: With two f's, like in Philadelphia. If you know the story.

PHYLLIS: What story?

NEFF: The Philadelphia story. What are we talking about?

PHYLLIS: (She works with her lipstick)
About the insurance. My husband never tells me anything.

NEFF: It's on your two cars, the La Salle and the Plymouth.

He crosses to the davenport to get the policies from his briefcase. She turns away from the mirror and sits in a big chair with her legs drawn up sideways, the anklet now clearly visible.

NEFF: We've been handling this insurance for three years for Mr. Dietrichson...
(His eyes have caught the anklet)
That's a honey of an anklet you're wearing, Mrs. Dietrichson.

Phyllis smiles faintly and covers the anklet with her dress.

NEFF: We'd hate to see the policies lapse. Of course, we give him thirty days. That's all we're allowed to give.

PHYLLIS: I guess he's been too busy down at Long Beach in the oil fields.

A-26 (Cont'd)

NEFF: Could I catch him home some evening for a few minutes?

PHYLLIS: I suppose so. But he's never home much before eight.

NEFF: That would be fine with me.

PHYLLIS: You're not connected with the Automobile Club, are you?

NEFF: No, the All-Risk, Mrs. Dietrichson. Why?

PHYLLIS: Somebody from the Automobile Club has been trying to get him. Do they have a better rate?

NEFF: If your husband's a member.

PHYLLIS: No, he isn't.

Phyllis rises and walks up and down, paying less and less attention.

NEFF: Well, he'd have to join the club and pay a membership fee to start with. The Automobile Club is fine. I never knock the other fellow's merchandise, Mrs. Dietrichson, but I can do just as well for you. I have a very attractive policy here. It wouldn't take me two minutes to put it in front of your husband.

He consults the policies he is holding.

NEFF: For instance, we're writing a new kind of fifty percent retention feature in the collision coverage.

Phyllis stops in her walk.

PHYLLIS: You're a smart insurance man, aren't you, Mr. Neff?

NEFF: I've had eleven years of it.

PHYLLIS: Doing pretty well?

A-26 (Cont'd)

NEFF: It's a living.

PHYLLIS: You handle just automobile insurance, or all kinds?

She sits down again, in the same position as before.

NEFF: All kinds. Fire, earthquake, theft, public liability, group insurance, industrial stuff and so on right down the line.

PHYLLIS: Accident insurance?

NEFF: Accident insurance? Sure, Mrs. Dietrichson.

His eyes fall on the anklet again.

NEFF: I wish you'd tell me what's engraved on that anklet.

PHYLLIS: Just my name.

NEFF: As for instance?

PHYLLIS: Phyllis.

NEFF: Phyllis. I think I like that.

PHYLLIS: But you're not sure?

NEFF: I'd have to drive it around the block a couple of times.

PHYLLIS: (Standing up again)
Mr. Neff, why don't you drop by tomorrow evening about eight-thirty. He'll be in then.

NEFF: Who?

PHYLLIS: My husband. You were anxious to talk to him weren't you?

NEFF: Sure, only I'm getting over it a little. If you know what I mean.

PHYLLIS: There's a speed limit in this state, Mr. Neff. Forty-five miles an hour.

NEFF: How fast was I going, officer?

A-26 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: I'd say about ninety.

NEFF: Suppose you get down off your motorcycle and give me a ticket.

PHYLLIS: Suppose I let you off with a warning this time.

NEFF: Suppose it doesn't take.

PHYLLIS: Suppose I have to whack you over the knuckles.

NEFF: Suppose I bust out crying and put my head on your shoulder.

PHYLLIS: Suppose you try putting it on my husband's shoulder.

NEFF: That tears it.

Neff takes his hat and briefcase.

NEFF: Eight-thirty tomorrow evening then, Mrs. Dietrichson.

PHYLLIS: That's what I suggested.

They both move toward the archway.

A-27 HALLWAY - PHYLLIS AND NEFF GOING TOWARDS THE ENTRANCE DOOR

NEFF: Will you be here, too?

PHYLLIS: I guess so. I usually am.

NEFF: Same chair, same perfume, same anklet?

PHYLLIS: (Opening the door)
I wonder if I know what you mean.

NEFF: I wonder if you wonder.

He walks out.

A-28 EXT. DIETRICHSON HOME - (DAY)

Shooting past Neff's parked car towards the entrance door, which is just closing. Neff comes towards the car, swinging his briefcase. He opens the car door and looks back with a confident smile.

NEFF'S VOICE
(Over scene)
She liked me. I could feel that. The way you feel when the cards are

A-29 ENTRANCE DOOR, DIETRICHSON HOME

In the upper panel the peep window opens and Phyllis looks out after Neff.

A-30 NEFF

He sits in his car, presses the starter button, looking back towards the little window in the entrance door.

A-31 ENTRANCE DOOR

The peep window is quickly closed from inside.

A-32 STREET

Neff makes a U-turn and drives back down the block.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-33 LONG SHOT - INSURANCE OFFICE - TWELFTH FLOOR - (DAY) - CAMERA HIGH

Activity on the eleventh floor below. Typewriters working, adding machines, filing clerks, secretaries, and so forth. Neff, wearing his hat and carrying his briefcase, enters from the vestibule. He walks towards his office. He passes a few salesmen, etc. There is an exchange of greetings. Just as he reaches his office a secretary comes out. She stops.

SECRETARY: Oh, Mr. Neff, Mr. Keyes wants to see you. He's been yelling for you all afternoon.

NEFF: Is he sore, or just frothing at the mouth a little? Here, park these for me, sweetheart.

He hands her his hat and briefcase and continues right on, CAMERA WITH HIM, to a door lettered:

BARTON KEYES - CLAIMS MANAGER

Keyes' voice is heard inside, plenty loud. Neff grins as he opens the door and goes in.

NEFF'S VOICE (Cont'd)

falling right for you, with a nice little pile of blue and yellow chips in the middle of the table. Only what I didn't know then was that I wasn't playing her. She was playing me -- with a deck of marked cards -- and the stakes weren't any blue and yellow chips. They were dynamite. I went back to the office that afternoon to see if I had any mail. It was the same afternoon you had that Sam Gorlopis on the carpet, that truck driver from Inglewood, remember, Keyes?

A-34 KEYES' OFFICE - (DAY)

A minor executive office, not too tidy: large desk across one corner, good carpet, several chairs, filing cabinet against one wall, a dictaphone on the corner of the desk.

Keyes is sitting behind the desk with his coat off but his hat on. A cigar is clamped in his mouth, ashes falling like snow down his vest, a gold chair and elk's tooth across it. On the other side of the desk sits Sam Gorlopis. He is a big, dumb bruiser, six feet three inches tall - a dirty work shirt and corduroy pants, rough, untidy hair, broad face, small piggish eyes. He holds a sweat-soaked hat on his knee with a hairy hand. He is chewing gum rapidly. As Neff opens the door, Keyes is giving it to Gorlopis.

KEYES: Wise up, Gorlopis. You're not kidding anybody with that line of bull. You're in a jam and you know it.

GORLOPIS: Sez you. All I want is my money.

KEYES: Sez you. All you're gonna get is the cops.

He sees Neff standing inside the door.

KEYES: Come in, Walter. This is Sam Gorlopis from Inglewood.

NEFF: Sure, I know Mr. Gorlopis. Wrote a policy on his truck. How are you, Mr. Gorlopis?

GORLOPIS: I ain't so good. My truck burned down.

He looks cautiously sideways at Keyes.

KEYES: Yeah, he just planted his big foot on the starter and the whole thing blazed up in his face.

GORLOPIS: Yes, sir.

KEYES: And didn't even singe his eyebrows.

GORLOPIS: No sir. Look, mister. I got twenty-six hundred bucks tied up in that truck. I'm insured with this company and I want my money.

KEYES: You got a wife, Gorlopis?

GORLOPIS: Sure I got a wife.

KEYES: You got kids?

A-34 (Cont'd)

GORLOPIS: Two kids.

KEYES: What you got for dinner tonight?

GORLOPIS: We got meat loaf.

KEYES: How do you make your meat loaf, Gorlopis?

GORLOPIS: Veal and pork and bread and garlic. Greek style.

KEYES: How much garlic?

GORLOPIS: Lotsa garlic, Mr. Keyes.

KEYES: Okay, Gorlopis. Now listen here. Let's say you just came up here to tell me how to make meat loaf. That's all, understand? Because if you came up here to claim on that truck, I'd have to turn you over to the law, Gorlopis, and they'd put you in jail. No wife. No kids --

GORLOPIS: What for?

KEYES: (Yelling)
And no meat loaf, Gorlopis!

GORLOPIS: I didn't do nothin'.

KEYES: No? Look, Gorlopis. Every month hundreds of claims come to this desk. Some of them are phonies, and I know which ones. How do I know, Gorlopis? (He speaks as if to a child) Because my little man tells me.

GORLOPIS: What little man?

KEYES: The little man in here.

He pounds the pit of his stomach.

KEYES: Everytime one of those phonies comes along he ties knots in my stomach. And yours was one of them, Gorlopis. That's how I knew your claim was crooked. So what did I do? I sent a tow car out to your garage this afternoon and they jacked up that burned-out truck of yours. And what did they find, Gorlopis? They found what was left of a pile of shavings.

A-34 (Cont'd)

GORLOPIS: What shavings?

KEYES: The ones you soaked with kerosene and dropped a match on.

Gorlopis cringes under the impact.

GORLOPIS: Look, Mr. Keyes, I'm just a poor guy. Maybe I made a mistake.

KEYES: That's one way of putting it.

GORLOPIS: I ain't feelin' so good, Mr. Keyes.

KEYES: Sign this and you'll feel fine.

He puts a blank form in front of him and points.

KEYES: Right there. It's a waiver on your claim.

Gorlopis hesitates, then signs laboriously.

KEYES: Now you're an honest man again.

GORLOPIS: But I ain't got no more truck.

KEYES: Goodbye, Gorlopis.

GORLOPIS: (Still bewildered)
Goodbye, Mr. Keyes.

He stands up and goes slowly to the door and turns there.

GORLOPIS: Twenty-six hundred bucks. That's a lot of dough where I live.

KEYES: What's the matter, Gorlopis? Don't you know how to open the door? Just put your hand on the knob, turn it to the right, pull it toward you --

GORLOPIS: (Doing just as Keyes says)
Like this, Mr. Keyes?

KEYES: That's the boy. Now the same thing from the outside.

GORLOPIS: (Stupefied)
Thank you, Mr. Keyes.

He goes out, closing the door after him. Keyes takes his cigar stub from his mouth and turns it slowly in the flame of a lighted match. He turns to Neff.

A-34 (Cont'd)

KEYES: What kind of an outfit is this anyway? Are we an insurance company, or a bunch of dimwitted amateurs, writing a policy on a mugg like that?

NEFF: Wait a minute, Keyes. I don't rate this beef. I clipped a note to that Gorlopis application to have him thoroughly investigated before we accepted the risk.

KEYES: I know you did, Walter. I'm not beefing at you. It's the company. The way they do things. The way they don't do things. The way they'll write anything just to get it down on the sales sheet. And I'm the guy that has to sit here up to my neck in phony claims so they won't throw more money out of the window than they take in at the door.

NEFF: (Grinning)
Okay, turn the record over and let's hear the other side.

KEYES: I get darn sick of picking up after a gang of fast-talking salesmen dumb enough to sell life insurance to a guy that sleeps in the same bed with four rattlesnakes. I've had twenty-six years of that, Walter, and I --

NEFF: And you loved every minute of it, Keyes. You love it, only you worry about it too much, you and your little man. You're so darn conscientious you're driving yourself crazy. You wouldn't even say today is Tuesday without you looked at the calendar, and then you would check if it was this year's or last year's calendar, and then you would find out what company printed the calendar, then find out if their calendar checks with the World Almanac's calendar.

KEYES: That's enough from you, Walter. Get out of here before I throw my desk at you.

NEFF: I love you, too.

He walks out, still grinning.

A-35 EXT. OFFICES - TWELFTH FLOOR

Neff comes out of Keys' office and walks back along the balcony. Activity of secretaries going in and out of doors, etc. Neff enters his own office.

A-36 INT. NEFF'S OFFICE

Anderson, a salesman, sits at one of the desks, filling out a report. Neff enters, goes to his own desk. He looks down at some mail. On top there is a typewritten note. He reads it, sits down and leafs through his desk calendar.

A-37 INSERT - CLOSEUP - CALENDAR PAGE

Showing date:

THURSDAY
23
May

and five or six appointments pencilled in tightly on the page.

NEFF'S VOICE
(Over scene)
I really did, too, you old crab, always yelling your fat head off, always sore at everyone. But behind the cigar ashes on your vest I kind of knew you had a heart as big as a house...Back in my office there was a phone message from Mrs. Dietrichson about the renewals. She didn't want me to come tomorrow evening. She wanted me to come Thursday afternoon at three-thirty instead. I had a lot of stuff lined up for that Thursday afternoon, including a trip down to Santa Monica to see a couple of live prospects about some group insurance. But I kept thinking about Phyllis Dietrichson and the way that anklet of hers cut into her leg.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-38 DIETRICHSON HOME - ENTRANCE HALL - (DAY)

THE CAMERA PANS with Phyllis Dietrichson's feet and ankles as she comes down the stairs, her high heels clicking on the tiles. The anklet glistens on her leg as she moves. THE CAMERA PANS ON. Phyllis has reached the entrance hall, and as she walks toward the front door her whole body becomes visible. She wears a gay print dress with a wide sash over her hips. She opens the door. Outside is Neff, wearing a sport coat, flannel slacks. He takes his hat off.

PHYLLIS: Hello, Mr. Neff.

He stands there with a little smile.

PHYLLIS: Aren't you coming in?

NEFF: I'm considering it.

He comes in.

(Continued)

A-38 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: I hope you didn't mind my changing the appointment. Last night wasn't so convenient.

NEFF: That's okay. I was working on my stamp collection.

She leads him toward living room.

A-39 DIETRICHSON LIVING ROOM

Phyllis and Neff come through archway. She heads toward a low tea table which stands in front of the davenport, with tall glasses, ice cubes, lemon, a pot of tea, etc.

PHYLLIS: I was just fixing some iced tea. Would you like a glass?

NEFF: Unless you have a bottle of beer that's not working.

PHYLLIS: There might be some. I never know what's in the ice box.
(Calls)
Nettie!....

She pours herself a glass of tea.

PHYLLIS: About those renewals, Mr. Neff. I talked to my husband about it.

NEFF: You did?

PHYLLIS: Yes. He'll renew with you he told me. In fact, I thought he'd be here this afternoon.

NEFF: But he's not?

PHYLLIS: No.

NEFF: That's terrible.

PHYLLIS: (Calls again, impatiently)
Nettie!..Nettie!....Oh, I forgot, it's the maid's day off.

NEFF: Don't bother, Mrs. Dietrichson. I'd like some iced tea very much.

PHYLLIS: Lemon? Sugar?

NEFF: Fix it your way.

A-39 (Cont'd)

She fixes him a glass of tea while he is looking around. He slowly sits down.

NEFF: Seeing it's the maid's day off maybe there's something I can do for you.

She hands him the tea.

NEFF: Like running the vacuum cleaner.

PHYLLIS: Fresh.

NEFF: I used to peddle vacuum cleaners. Not much money but you learn a lot about life.

PHYLLIS: I didn't think you'd learned it from a correspondence course.

NEFF: Where did you pick up this tea drinking? You're not English, are you?

PHYLLIS: No. Californian. Born right here in Los Angeles.

NEFF: They say native Californians all come from Iowa.

PHYLLIS: I wanted to ask you something, Mr. Neff.

NEFF: Make it Walter.

PHYLLIS: Walter.

NEFF: Right.

PHYLLIS: Tell me, Walter, on this insurance - how much commission do you make?

NEFF: Twenty percent. Why?

PHYLLIS: I thought maybe I could throw a little more business your way.

NEFF: I can always use it.

PHYLLIS: I was thinking about my husband. I worry a lot about him, down in those oil fields. It's very dangerous.

NEFF: Not for an executive, is it?

A-39 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: He doesn't just sit behind a desk. He's right down there with the drilling crews. It's got me worried sick.

NEFF: You mean a crown block might fall on him some rainy night?

PHYLLIS: Please don't talk like that.

NEFF: But that's the idea.

PHYLLIS: The other day a casing line snapped and caught the foreman. He's in the hospital with a broken back.

NEFF: Bad.

PHYLLIS: It's got me jittery just thinking about it. Suppose something like that happened to my husband?

NEFF: It could.

PHYLLIS: Don't you think he ought to have accident insurance?

NEFF: Uh huh.

PHYLLIS: What kind of insurance could he have?

NEFF: Enough to cover doctors' and hospital bills. Say a hundred and twenty-five a week cash benefit. And he'd rate around fifty thousand capital sum.

PHYLLIS: Capital sum? What's that?

NEFF: That's if he got killed. Maybe I shouldn't have said that.

PHYLLIS: I suppose you have to think of everything in your business.

NEFF: Mr. Dietrichson would understand. I'm sure I could sell him on the idea of some accident protection. Why don't I talk to him about it.

PHYLLIS: You could try. But he's pretty tough going.

NEFF: They're all tough at first.

A-39 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: He's got a lot on his mind. He doesn't want to listen to anything except maybe a baseball game on the radio. Sometimes we sit all evening without saying a word to each other.

NEFF: Sounds pretty dull.

Phyllis shrugs.

PHYLLIS: So I just sit and knit.

NEFF: Is that what you married him for?

PHYLLIS: Maybe I like the way his thumbs hold up the wool.

NEFF: Anytime his thumbs get tired---
(Pause)

PHYLLIS: I want to ask you something, Mr. Neff. Could I get an accident policy for him--- without bothering him at all?

NEFF: How's that again.

PHYLLIS: That would make it easier for you, too. You wouldn't even have to talk to him. I have a little allowance of my own. I could pay for it and he needn't know anything about it.

NEFF: Wait a minute. Why shouldn't he know?

PHYLLIS: Because I know he doesn't want accident insurance. He's superstitious about it.

NEFF: A lot of people are. Funny, isn't it?

PHYLLIS: If there was a way to get it like that, all the worry would be over. You see what I mean, Walter?

NEFF: Sure. I've got good eyesight. You want him to have the policy without him knowing it. And that means without the insurance company knowing that he doesn't know. That's the set-up, isn't it?

PHYLLIS: Is there anything wrong with it?

NEFF: I think it's lovely. And then, some dark wet night, if that crown block fell on him --

A-39 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: What crown block?

NEFF: Only sometimes they have to have a little help. They can't quite make it on their own.

PHYLLIS: I don't know what you're talking about.

NEFF: Of course, it doesn't have to be a crown block. It can be a car backing over him, or he can fall out of an upstairs window. Any little thing like that, as long as it's a morgue job.

PHYLLIS: Are you crazy?

NEFF: Not that crazy. Goodbye, Mrs. Dietrichson.

He picks up his hat.

PHYLLIS: What's the matter?

NEFF: Look, baby, you can't get away with it.

PHYLLIS: Get away with what?

NEFF: You want to knock him off, don't you, baby.

PHYLLIS: That's a horrible thing to say!

NEFF: Who'd you think I was, anyway? A guy that walks into a good-looking dame's front parlor and says "Good afternoon, I sell accident insurance on husbands. You got one that's been around too long? Somebody you'd like to turn into a little hard cash? Just give me a smile and I'll help you collect." Boy, what a dope I must look to you!

PHYLLIS: I think you're rotten.

NEFF: I think you're swell. So long as I'm not your husband.

PHYLLIS: Get out of here.

NEFF: You bet I will. You bet I'll get out of here, baby. But quick.

He goes out. She looks after him.

A-40 EXT. DIETRICHSON HOME - (DAY)

Neff bangs the front door shut, walks quickly to his car and drives away.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-41 DRIVE-IN RESTAURANT - (DAY)

Shooting past Neff sitting behind the wheel of his car The car hop hangs a tray on the door and serves him a bottle of beer.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-42 INT. BOWLING ALLEY

Neff bowling. He rolls the ball with an effort at concentration, but his mind is not really on the game.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-43 EXT. APARTMENT HOUSE - (DUSK)

It is late afternoon. The apartment house is called the LOS OLIVOS APARTMENTS. It is a six-story building in the Normandie-Wilshire district, with a basement garage. THE CAMERA PANS UP the front of the building to the top floor windows, as a little rain starts to fall.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-44 INT. NEFF'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - (DUSK)

It is a double apartment of conventional design, with kitchen, dinette, and bathroom, square-cut overstuffed borax furniture. Gas logs are lit in the imitation fireplace. Neff stands by the window with his coat off and his tie loose. Raindrops strike against the glass. He turns away impatiently, paces up and down past a caddy bag with golf clubs in it, pulls one out at random, makes a couple of short swings, throws the club on the couch, paces again.

NEFF'S VOICE
(Over scene)
So I let her have it, straight between the eyes. She didn't fool me for a minute, not this time. I knew I had hold of a red-hot poker and the time to drop it was before it burned my hand off. I stopped at a drive-in for a bottle of beer, the one I had wanted all along, only I wanted it worse now, to get rid of the sour taste of her iced tea, and everything that went with it. I didn't want to go back to the office, so I dropped by a bowling alley at Third and Western and rolled a few lines to get my mind thinking about something else for a while.

NEFF'S VOICE
(Continuing)
I didn't feel like eating dinner when I left, and I didn't feel like a show, so I drove home, put the car away and went up to my apartment.

It had begun to rain outside and I watched it get dark and didn't even turn on the light. That didn't help me either. I was all twisted up inside, and I was still holding on to that red-hot poker. And right then it came over me that I hadn't walked out on anything at all, that the hook was too strong, that this wasn't the end between her and me. It was only the beginning.

(Continued)

A-44 (Cont'd)

The doorbell rings.

So at eight o'clock the bell would ring and I would know who it was without even having to think, as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

Neff goes to the door and opens it.

PHYLLIS: Hello.

Neff just looks at her.

PHYLLIS: You forgot your hat this afternoon.

She has nothing in her hands but her bag.

NEFF: Did I?

He looks down at her hands.

PHYLLIS: Don't you want me to bring it in?

NEFF: Sure. Put it on the chair.

She comes in. He closes the door.

NEFF: How did you know where I live?

PHYLLIS: It's in the phone book.

Neff switches on the standing lamp.

PHYLLIS: It's raining.

NEFF: So it is. Peel off your coat and sit down.

She starts to take off her coat.

NEFF: Your husband out?

PHYLLIS: Long Beach. They're spudding in a new well. He phoned he'd be late. About nine-thirty.

He takes her coat and lays it across the back of a chair.

PHYLLIS: It's about time you said you're glad to see me.

NEFF: I knew you wouldn't leave it like that.

PHYLLIS: Like what?

A-44 (Cont'd)

NEFF: Like it was this afternoon.

PHYLLIS: I must have said something that gave you a terribly wrong impression. You must surely see that. You must never think anything like that about me, Walter.

NEFF: Okay.

PHYLLIS: It's not okay. Not if you don't believe me.

NEFF: What do you want me to do?

PHYLLIS: I want you to be nice to me. Like the first time you came to the house.

NEFF: It can't be like the first time. Something has happened.

PHYLLIS: I know it has. It's happened to us.

NEFF: That's what I mean.

Phyllis has moved over to the window. She stares out through the wet window-pane.

NEFF: What's the matter now?

PHYLLIS: I feel as if he was watching me. Not that he cares about me. Not any more. But he keeps me on a leash. So tight I can't breathe. I'm scared.

NEFF: What of? He's in Long Beach, isn't he?

PHYLLIS: I oughtn't to have come.

NEFF: Maybe you oughtn't.

PHYLLIS: You want me to go?

NEFF: If you want to.

PHYLLIS: Right now?

NEFF: Sure. Right now.

By this time, he has hold of her wrist. He draws her to him slowly and kisses her. Her arms tighten around him. After a moment he pulls his head back, still holding her close.

NEFF: How were you going to do it?

A-44 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: Do what?

NEFF: Kill him.

PHYLLIS: Walter, for the last time --

She tries to jerk away but he holds her and kisses her again.

NEFF: I'm crazy about you, baby.

PHYLLIS: I'm crazy about you, Walter.

NEFF: That perfume on your hair. What's the name of it?

PHYLLIS: Something French. I bought it down at Ensenada.

NEFF: We ought to have some of that pink wine to go with it. The kind that bubbles. But all I have is bourbon.

PHYLLIS: Bourbon is fine, Walter.

He lets her go and moves toward the dinette.

A-45 THE DINETTE AND KITCHEN

It contains a small table and some chairs. A low glass-and-china cabinet is built between the dinette and kitchen, leaving a space like a doorway. The kitchen is the usual apartment house kitchen, with stove, ice-box, sink, etc. It is quite small.

Neff goes to the ice-box and Phyllis drifts in after him.

NEFF: Soda?

PHYLLIS: Plain water, please.

NEFF: Get a couple of glasses, will you.

He points at the china closet. He has taken a tray of ice cubes from the refrigerator and is holding it under the hot-water faucet.

NEFF: You know, about six months ago a guy slipped on the soap in his bathtub and knocked himself cold and drowned. Only he had accident insurance. So they had an autopsy and she didn't get away with it.

Phyllis has the glasses now. She hands them to him. He dumps some ice cubes into the glasses.

A-45 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: Who didn't?

NEFF: His wife.

He reaches for the whiskey bottle on top of the china closet.

And there was another case where a guy was found shot and his wife said he was cleaning a gun and his stomach got in the way. All she collected was a three-to-ten stretch in Tehachapi.

PHYLLIS: Perhaps it was worth it to her.

Neff hands her a glass.

NEFF: See if you can carry this as far as the living room.

They move back toward the living room.

A-46 LIVING ROOM

Phyllis and Neff go toward the davenport. She is sipping her drink and looking around.

PHYLLIS: It's nice here, Walter. Who takes care of it for you?

NEFF: A colored woman comes in twice a week.

PHYLLIS: You get your own breakfast?

NEFF: Once in a while I squeeze a grapefruit. The rest I get at the corner drugstore.

They sit on the davenport, fairly close together.

PHYLLIS: It sounds wonderful. Just strangers beside you. You don't know them. You don't hate them. You don't have to sit across the table and smile at him and that daughter of his every morning of your life.

NEFF: What daughter? Oh, that little girl on the piano.

PHYLLIS: Yes. Lola. She lives with us. He thinks a lot more of her than he does of me.

NEFF: Ever think of a divorce?

PHYLLIS: He wouldn't give me a divorce.

A-46 (Cont'd)

NEFF: I suppose because it would cost him money.

PHYLLIS: He hasn't got any money. Not since he went into the oil business.

NEFF: But he had when you married him?

PHYLLIS: Yes, he had. And I wanted a home. Why not? But that wasn't the only reason. I was his wife's nurse. She was sick for a long time. When she died, he was all broken up. I pitied him so.

NEFF: And now you hate him.

PHYLLIS: Yes, Walter. He's so mean to me. Everytime I buy a dress or a pair of shoes he yells his head off. He won't let me go anywhere. He keeps me shut up. He's always been mean to me. Even his life insurance all goes to that daughter of his. That Lola.

NEFF: Nothing for you at all, huh?

PHYLLIS: No. And nothing is just what I'm worth to him.

NEFF: So you lie awake in the dark and listen to him snore and get ideas.

PHYLLIS: Walter, I don't want to kill him. I never did. Not even when he gets drunk and slaps my face.

NEFF: Only sometimes you wish he was dead.

PHYLLIS: Perhaps I do.

NEFF: And you wish it was an accident, and you had that policy. For fifty thousand dollars. Is that it?

PHYLLIS: Perhaps that too.

She takes a long drink.

The other night we drove home from a party. He was drunk again. When we got into the garage he just sat there with his head on the steering wheel and the motor still running. And I thought what it would be like if I didn't switch it off, just closed the garage door and left him there.

A-46 (Cont'd)

NEFF: I'll tell you what it would be like, if you had that accident policy, and tried to pull a monoxide job. We have a guy in our office named Keyes. For him a set-up like that would be just like a slice of rare roast beef. In three minutes he'd know it wasn't an accident. In ten minutes you'd be sitting under the hot lights. In half an hour you'd be signing your name to a confession.

PHYLLIS: But Walter, I didn't do it. I'm not going to do it.

NEFF: Not if there's an insurance company in the picture, baby. So long as you're honest they'll pay you with a smile, but you just try to pull something like that and you'll find out. They know more tricks than a carload of monkeys. And if there's a death mixed up in it, you haven't got a prayer. They'll hang you as sure as ten dimes will buy a dollar, baby.

She begins to cry. He puts his arms around her and kisses her.

NEFF: Just stop thinking about it, will you.

He holds her tight. Their heads touch, side by side, THE CAMERA SLOWLY STARTS TO RECEDE as we

DISSOLVE TO:

A-47 INT. NEFF'S OFFICE - (NIGHT)

Neff sits in the swivel chair, talking into the dictaphone. He has hooked the wastebasket under his feet to sit more comfortably. As he talks, a little cough shakes him now and then.

NEFF: So we just sat there, and she kept on crying softly, like the rain on the window, and we didn't say anything. Maybe she had stopped thinking about it, but I hadn't. I couldn't. Because it all tied up with something I had been thinking about for years, since long before I ever ran into Phyllis Dietrichson. Because, in this business you can't sleep for trying to figure out the tricks they could pull on you. You're like the guy behind the roulette wheel, watching the customers to make sure

A-47 (Cont'd)

NEFF: (Cont'd) they don't crook the house. And then one night, you get to thinking how you could crook the house yourself. And do it smart. Because you've got that wheel right under your hands. And you know every notch in it by heart. And you figure all you need is a plant out in front, a shill to put down the bet. And suddenly the doorbell rings and the whole set-up is right there in the room with you. . . Look, Keyes, I'm not trying to whitewash myself. I fought it, only maybe I didn't fight it hard enough. The stakes were fifty thousand dollars, but they were the life of a man, too, a man who'd never done me any dirt. Except he was married to a woman he didn't care anything about, and I did. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

A-48 INT. NEFF'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY towards the davenport again. Neff sits in one corner with his feet on the low table. He is smoking his cigarette and staring at the ceiling. Phyllis has been sitting fairly close to him. She gets up slowly and crosses to her rain coat, lying over a chair.

PHYLLIS: I've got to go now, Walter.

Neff does not answer. He keeps on staring at the ceiling. She starts to put the rain coat on.

PHYLLIS: Will you call me, Walter?

Neff still does not answer.

PHYLLIS: Walter!

He looks at her slowly, almost absently.

PHYLLIS: I hate him. I loathe going back to him. You believe me, don't you, Walter?

NEFF: Sure I believe you.

PHYLLIS: I can't stand it anymore. What if they did hang me?

NEFF: You're not going to hang, baby.

PHYLLIS: It's better than going on this way.

SEQUENCE "B"

FADE IN:

B-1 INT. NEFF'S OFFICE - (NIGHT)

Neff sits slumped in his chair before the dictaphone. On the desk next to him stands a used record. The cylinder on the dictaphone is not turning. He is smoking a cigarette. He kills it then lifts the needle and slides off the record which is on the machine and stands it on end on the desk beside the other used record. He reaches down painfully to take another record from the rack beneath the dictaphone, looks at it against the light to make sure it has not been used, then slides it into place on the machine and resets the needle. He lifts the horn and resumes his dictation.

NEFF: The first thing we had to do was fix him up with that accident policy. I knew he wouldn't buy, but all I wanted was his signature on an application. So I had to make him sign without his knowing what he was signing. And I wanted a witness other than Phyllis to hear me give him a sales talk. I was trying to think with your brains, Keyes. I wanted all the answers ready for all the questions you were going to spring as soon as Dietrichson was dead.

Neff takes a last drag on his cigarette and kills it by running it under the ledge of the dictaphone stand. He drops the stub on the floor and resumes.

NEFF: A couple of nights later I went to the house. Everything looked fine, except I didn't like the witness Phyllis had brought in. It was Dietrichson's daughter Lola, and it made me feel a little queer in the belly to have her right there in the room, playing Chinese checkers, as if nothing was going to happen.

DISSOLVE:

B-2 A BOARD OF CHINESE CHECKERS

CAMERA WITHDRAWS AND GRADUALLY REVEALS THE DIETRICHSON LIVING ROOM - NIGHT. The checker-board is on the davenport between Phyllis and Lola. Mr. Dietrichson sits in a big easy chair. His coat and tie are over the back of the chair, and the evening paper is lying tumbled on the floor beside him. He is smoking a cigar with the band on it. He has a drink in front of him and several more inside him. In another chair sits Neff, his briefcase on the floor, leaning against his chair. He holds his rate book partly open, with a finger in it for a marker. He is going full swing.

B-2 (Cont'd)

NEFF: I suppose you realize, Mr. Dietrichson, that, not being an employee, you are not covered by the State Compensation Insurance Act. The only way you can protect yourself is by having a personal policy of your own.

DIETRICHSON: I know all about that. The next thing you'll tell me I need earthquake insurance and lightning insurance and hail insurance.

Phyllis looks up from the checker-board and cuts in on the dialogue. Lola listens without much interest.

PHYLLIS: (To Dietrichson) If we bought all the insurance they can think up, we'd stay broke paying for it, wouldn't we, honey?

DIETRICHSON: What keeps us broke is you going out and buying five hats at a crack. Who needs a hat in California?

NEFF: I always say insurance is a lot like a hot water bottle. It looks kind of useless and silly hanging on the hook, but when you get that stomach ache in the middle of the night, it comes in mighty handy.

DIETRICHSON: Now you want to sell me a hot water bottle.

NEFF: Dollar for dollar, accident insurance is the cheapest coverage you can buy, Mr. Dietrichson.

DIETRICHSON: Maybe some other time, Mr. Neff. I had a tough day.

NEFF: Just as you say, Mr. Dietrichson.

DIETRICHSON: Suppose we just settle that automobile insurance tonight.

NEFF: Sure. All we need on that is for you to sign an application for renewal.

Phyllis throws a quick glance at Neff. As she looks back she sees that Lola is staring down at her wrist watch.

LOLA: Phyllis, do you mind if we don't finish this game? It bores me stiff.

B-2 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: Got something better to do?

LOLA: Yes, I have.

She gets up.

LOLA: (To Dietrichson) Father, is it all right if I run along now?

DIETRICHSON: Run along where? Who with?

LOLA: Just Anne. We're going roller skating.

DIETRICHSON: Anne who?

LOLA: Anne Matthews.

PHYLLIS: It's not that Nino Zacchetti again?

DIETRICHSON: It better not be that Zacchetti guy. If I ever catch you with that ---

LOLA: It's Anne Matthews, I told you. I also told you we're going roller skating. I'm meeting her at the corner of Vermont and Franklin -- the north-west corner, in case you're interested. And I'm late already. I hope that is all clear. Good night, Father. Good night, Phyllis.

She starts to go.

NEFF: Good night, Miss Dietrichson.

LOLA: Oh, I'm sorry. Good night, Mr. --

NEFF: Neff.

LOLA: Good night, Mr. Neff.

PHYLLIS: Now you're not going to take my car again.

LOLA: No thanks. I'd rather be dead.

She goes out through the archway.

DIETRICHSON: A great little fighter for her weight.

Dietrichson sucks down a big swallow of his drink.

B-2 (Cont'd)

Neff has taken two blank forms from his briefcase. He puts the briefcase on Mr. Dietrichson's lap and lays the forms on top. Phyllis is watching closely.

NEFF: This is where you sign, Mr. Dietrichson.

DIETRICHSON: Sign what?

NEFF: The applications for your auto renewals. So you'll be protected until the new policies are issued.

DIETRICHSON: When will that be?

NEFF: In about a week.

DIETRICHSON: Just so I'm covered when I drive up North.

Neff takes out his fountain pen.

NEFF: San Francisco, Mr. Dietrichson?

DIETRICHSON: Palo Alto.

PHYLLIS: He was a Stanford man, Mr. Neff. And he still goes to his class reunion every year.

DIETRICHSON: What's wrong with that? Can't I have a little fun even once a year?

NEFF: Great football school, Stanford. Did you play football, Mr. Dietrichson?

DIETRICHSON: Left guard. Almost made the varsity, too.

Neff has unscrewed his fountain pen. He hands it to Mr. Dietrichson. Dietrichson puts on his glasses.

NEFF: On that bottom line, Mr. Dietrichson.

Dietrichson signs. Neff's and Phyllis' eyes meet for a split second.

NEFF: Both copies, please.

He withdraws the top copy barely enough to expose the signature line on the supposed duplicate.

DIETRICHSON: Sign twice, huh?

B-2 (Cont'd)

NEFF: One is the agent's copy. I need it for my files.

DIETRICHSON: (In a mutter)
Files. Duplicates. Triplicates.

Dietrichson grunts and signs again. Again Neff and Phyllis exchange a quick glance.

NEFF: No hurry about the check, Mr. Dietrichson. I can pick it up at your office some morning.

Casually Neff lifts the briefcase and signed applications off Dietrichson's lap.

DIETRICHSON: How much you taking me for?

NEFF: One forty-seven fifty, Mr. Dietrichson.

Dietrichson stands up. He is about Neff's height but a little heavier.

PHYLLIS: I guess that's enough insurance for one evening, Mr. Neff.

DIETRICHSON: Plenty.

Dietrichson has poured some more whisky into his glass. He tries the siphon but it is empty. He gathers up his coat and tie and picks up his glass.

DIETRICHSON: Good night, Mr. Neff.

Neff is zipping up his briefcase.

NEFF: Good night, Mr. Dietrichson.
Good night, Mrs. Dietrichson.

DIETRICHSON: Bring me some soda when you come up, Phyllis.

Dietrichson trundles off towards the archway.

PHYLLIS: (To Neff)
I think you left your hat in the hall.

Phyllis leads the way and Neff goes after her, his briefcase under his arm.

B-3 HALLWAY DIETRICHSON RESIDENCE - (NIGHT)

Phyllis enters through the living room archway with Neff behind her. She leads him towards the door. On the way he picks up his hat. In the BACKGROUND Dietrichson begins to ascend the stairs, carrying his coat and glass. Phyllis and Neff move close to the door. They speak in very low voices.

PHYLLIS: All right, Walter?

NEFF: Fine.

PHYLLIS: He signed it, didn't he?

NEFF: Sure he signed it. You saw him.

Phyllis opens the door a crack. Both look at the stairs, where Dietrichson is going up. Phyllis takes her hand off the doorknob and holds on to Neff's arm.

NEFF: (Looking up)
Watch it, will you.

Phyllis slowly drops her hand from his arm. Both look up as Dietrichson goes across the balcony and out of sight.

NEFF: Listen. That trip to Palo Alto. When does he go?

PHYLLIS: End of the month.

NEFF: He drives, huh?

PHYLLIS: He always drives.

NEFF: Not this time. You're going to make him take the train.

PHYLLIS: Why?

NEFF: Because it's all worked out for a train.

For a second they stand listening and looking up as if they had heard a sound.

PHYLLIS: It's all right. Go on, Walter.

NEFF: Look, baby. There's a clause in every accident policy, a little something called double indemnity. The insurance companies put it in as a sort of come-on for the customers. It means they pay double on certain accidents. The kind that almost never happen. Like for instance if a guy got killed on a train, they'd pay a hundred thousand instead of fifty.

B-3 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: I see.
(Her eyes widen with excitement)

NEFF: We're hitting it for the limit, baby. That's why it's got to be a train.

PHYLLIS: It's going to be a train, Walter. Just the way you say. Straight down the line.

They look at each other. The look is like a long kiss. Neff goes out. Slowly Phyllis closes the door and leans her head against it as she looks up the empty stairway.

B-4 EXT. DIETRICHSON RESIDENCE - (NIGHT)

Neff, briefcase under his arm, comes down the steps to the street, where his Dodge coupe is parked at the curb. He opens the door and stops, looking in.

Sitting there in the dark corner of the car, away from the steering wheel, is Lola. She wears a coat but no hat.

LOLA: Hello, Mr. Neff. It's me.

Lola gives him a sly smile. Neff is a little annoyed.

NEFF: Something the matter?

LOLA: I've been waiting for you.

NEFF: For me? What for?

LOLA: I thought you could let me ride with you, if you're going my way.

Neff doesn't like the idea very much.

NEFF: Which way would that be?

LOLA: Down the hill. Down Vermont..

NEFF: (Remembering) Oh, sure. Vermont and Franklin. North-west corner, wasn't it? Be glad to, Miss Dietrichson.

Neff gets into the car.

B-5 INT. COUPE - (NIGHT) - (TRANSPARENCY)

Neff puts the briefcase on the ledge behind the driver's seat. He closes the door and starts the car. They drift down the hill.

B-5 (Cont'd)

NEFF: Roller skating, eh? You like roller skating?

LOLA: I can take it or leave it.

Neff looks at her curiously. Lola meets his glance.

NEFF: Only tonight you're leaving it?

This is an embarrassing moment for Lola.

LOLA: Yes, I am. You see, Mr. Neff, I'm having a very tough time at home. My father doesn't understand me and Phyllis hates me.

NEFF: That does sound tough, all right.

LOLA: That's why I have to lie sometimes.

NEFF: You mean it's not Vermont and Franklin.

LOLA: It's Vermont and Franklin all right. Only it's not Anne Matthews. It's Nino Zacetti. You won't tell on me, will you?

NEFF: I'd have to think it over.

LOLA: Nino's not what my father says at all. He just had bad luck. He was doing pre-med at U.S.C. and working nights as an usher in a theater downtown. He got behind in his credits and flunked out. Then he lost his job for talking back. He's so hot-headed.

NEFF: That comes expensive, doesn't it?

LOLA: I guess my father thinks nobody's good enough for his daughter except maybe the guy that owns Standard Oil. Would you like a stick of gum?

NEFF: Never use it, thanks.

Lola puts a stick of gum in her mouth.

LOLA: I can't give Nimo up. I wish father could see it my way.

NEFF: It'll straighten out all right, Miss Dietrichson.

B-5 (Cont'd)

LOLA: I suppose it will sometime.
(Looking out)
This is the corner right here, Mr. Neff.

Neff brings the car to a stop by the curb.

LOLA: There he is. By the bus stop.

Neff looks out.

B-6 CORNER VERMONT AND FRANKLIN - (NIGHT)

Zacchetti stands waiting, hands in trouser pockets. He is about twenty-five, Italian looking, open shirt, not well dressed.

B-7 INT. COUPE - (NIGHT) - LOLA AND NEFF

LOLA: He needs a hair-cut, doesn't he. Look at him. No job, no car, no money, no prospects, no nothing.
(Pause)
I love him.

She leans over and honks on the horn.

LOLA: (Calling)
Nino!

B-8 ZACCHETTI

He turns around and looks towards the car.

LOLA'S VOICE: Over here, Nino.

Zacchetti walks towards the car.

B-9 THE COUPE

Neff and Lola. She has opened the door. Zacchetti comes up.

LOLA: This is Mr. Neff, Nino.

NEFF: Hello, Nino.

ZACCHETTI: (Belligerent from the first word)
The name is Zacchetti.

LOLA: Nino. Please. Mr. Neff gave me a ride from the house. I told him all about us.

B-9 (Cont'd)

ZACCHETTI: Why does he have to get told about us?

LOLA: We don't have to worry about Mr. Neff, Nino.

ZACCHETTI: I'm not doing any worrying. Just don't you broadcast so much.

LOLA: What's the matter with you, Nino? He's a friend.

ZACCHETTI: I don't have any friends. And if I did, I like to pick them myself.

NEFF: Look, sonny, she needed the ride and I brought her along. Is that anything to get tough about?

ZACCHETTI: All right, Lola, make up your mind. Are you coming or aren't you?

LOLA: Of course I'm coming. Don't mind him, Mr. Neff.

Lola steps out of the car.

LOLA: Thanks a lot. You've been very sweet.

Lola catches up with Zacchetti and they walk away together.

B-10 INT. COUPE

Neff looks after them. Slowly he puts the car in gear and drives on. His face is tight. Behind his head, light catches the metal of the zipper on the briefcase. Over the shot comes the COMMENTARY:

NEFF'S VOICE
She was a nice kid and maybe he was a little better than he sounded. I kind of hoped so for her sake, but right then it gave me a nasty feeling to be thinking about them at all, with that briefcase right behind my head and her father's application in it. Besides, I had other problems to work out. There were plans to make, and Phyllis had to be in on them . . .

DISSOLVE TO:

B-11 EXT. SUPER MARKET - (DAY)

There is a fair amount of activity but the place is not crowded. Neff comes along the sidewalk into the shot. He passes in front of the fruit and vegetable display and goes between the stalls into the market.

NEFF'S VOICE
(continued)
. . . but we couldn't be seen together any more and I had told her never to call me from her house and never to call me at my office. So we had picked out a big market on Los Feliz. She was to be there buying stuff every day about eleven o'clock, and I could run into her there. Kind of accidentally on purpose.

B-12 INT. MARKET

Neff stops by the cashier's desk and buys a pack of cigarettes. As he is opening the pack he looks back casually beyond the turnstile into the rear part of the market.

B-13 ROWS OF HIGH SHELVES IN MARKET

The shelves are loaded with canned goods and other merchandise. Customers move around selecting articles and putting them in their baskets. Phyllis is seen among them, standing by the soap section. Her basket is partly filled. She wears a simple house dress, no hat, and has a large envelope pocketbook under her arm.

B-14 INT. MARKET

Neff has spotted Phyllis. Without haste he passes through the turnstile towards the back.

B-15 THE SHELVES

Phyllis is putting a can of cleaning powder into her basket. Neff enters the shot and moves along the shelves towards her, very slowly, pretending to inspect the goods. A customer passes and goes on out of scene. Phyllis and Neff are now very close. During the ensuing low-spoken dialogue, they continue to face the shelves, not looking at each other.

PHYLLIS: Walter.

NEFF: Not so loud.

PHYLLIS: I wanted to talk to you, Walter. Ever since yesterday.

B-15 (Cont'd)

NEFF: Let me talk first. It's all set. The accident policy came through. I've got it in my pocket. I got his check too. I saw him down in the oil fields. He thought he was paying for the auto insurance. The check's just made out to the company. It could be for anything. But you have to send a check for the auto insurance, see. It's all right that way, because one of the cars is yours.

PHYLLIS: But listen, Walter ---

NEFF: Quick, open your bag.

She hesitates, then opens it. Neff looks around quickly, slips the policy out of his pocket and drops it into her bag. She snaps the bag shut.

NEFF: Can you get into his safe deposit box?

PHYLLIS: Yes. We both have keys.

NEFF: Fine. But don't put the policy in there yet. I'll tell you when. And listen, you never touched it or even saw it, understand?

PHYLLIS: I'm not a fool.

NEFF: Okay. When is he taking the train?

PHYLLIS: Walter, that's just it. He isn't going.

NEFF: What?

PHYLLIS: That's what I've been trying to tell you. The trip is off.

NEFF: What's happened?

He breaks off as a short, squatty woman, pushing a child in a walker, comes into sight and approaches. She stops beside Neff, who is pretending to read a label on a can. Phyllis puts a few cakes of soap into her basket.

WOMAN: (To Neff)
Mister, could you reach me that can of coffee?
(She points)
That one up there.

(Continued)

B-15 (Cont'd)

NEFF: (Reaching up)
This one?

She nods. Neff reaches a can down from the high shelf and hands it to her.

WOMAN: I don't see why they always have to put what I want on the top shelf.

She moves away with her coffee and her child. Out of the corner of his eye Neff watches her go. He moves closer to Phyllis again.

NEFF: Go ahead. I'm listening.

PHYLLIS: He had a fall down at the well. He broke his leg. It's in a cast.

NEFF: That knocks it on the head all right.

PHYLLIS: What do we do, Walter?

NEFF: Nothing. Just wait.

PHYLLIS: Wait for what?

NEFF: Until he can take a train. I told you it's got to be a train.

PHYLLIS: We can't wait. I can't go on like this.

NEFF: We're not going to grab a hammer and do it quick, just to get it over with.

PHYLLIS: There are other ways.

NEFF: Only we're not going to do it other ways.

PHYLLIS: But we can't leave it like this. What do you think would happen if he found out about this accident policy?

NEFF: Plenty. But not as bad as sitting in that death-house.

PHYLLIS: Don't ever talk like that, Walter.

NEFF: Just don't let's start losing our heads.

(Continued)

B-15 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: It's not our heads. It's our nerve we're losing.

NEFF: We're going to do it right. That's all I said.

PHYLLIS: Walter maybe it's my nerves. It's the waiting that gets me.

NEFF: It's getting me just as bad, baby. But we've got to wait.

PHYLLIS: Maybe we have, Walter. Only it's so tough without you. It's like a wall between us.

Neff looks at his watch.

NEFF: Good-bye baby. I'm thinking of you every minute.

He goes off. She stares after him.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-16 NEFF'S OFFICE - (DAY)

He is wearing a light grey suit and has his hat on. He is standing behind his desk opening some mail, taking a few papers out of his briefcase, checking something in his rate book, making a quick telephone call. But nothing of this is heard.

NEFF'S VOICE
After that a full week went by and I didn't see her once. I tried to keep my mind off her and off the whole idea. I kept telling myself that maybe those fates they say watch over you had gotten together and broken his leg to give me a way out. Then it was the fifteenth of June. You may remember that date, Keyes. I do too, only for a very different reason. You came into my office around three in the afternoon...

Keyes enters with some papers in his hand.

NEFF: Hello, Keyes.

KEYES: I just came from Norton's office. The semi-annual sales records are out. You're high man, Walter. That's twice in a row. Congratulations.

NEFF: Thanks. How would you like a cheap drink?

KEYES: How would you like a fifty dollar cut in salary?

NEFF: How would I -- Do I laugh now, or wait until it gets funny?

KEYES: I'm serious, Walter. I've been talking to Norton. There's too much stuff piling up on my desk. Too much pressure on my nerves. I spend half the night walking up and down in my bed. I've got to have an assistant. I thought that you --

NEFF: Me? Why pick on me?

KEYES: Because I've got a crazy idea you might be good at the job.

NEFF: That's crazy all right. I'm a salesman.

KEYES: Yeah. A peddler, a glad-hander, a back-slapper. You're too good to be a salesman.

NEFF: Nobody's too good to be a salesman.

B-16 (Cont'd)

KEYES: Phooey. All you guys do is ring doorbells and dish out a smooth line of monkey talk. What's bothering you is that fifty buck cut, isn't it?

NEFF: That'd bother anybody.

KEYES: Look, Walter. The job I'm talking about takes brains and integrity. It takes more guts than there is in fifty salesmen. It's the hottest job in the business.

NEFF: It's still a desk job. I don't want a desk job.

KEYES: A desk job. Is that all you can see in it? Just a hard chair to park your pants on from nine to five. Just a pile of papers to shuffle around, and five sharp pencils and a scratch pad to make figures on, with maybe a little doodling on the side. That's not the way I see it, Walter. To me a claims man is a surgeon, and that desk is an operating table, and those pencils are scalpels and bone chisels. And those papers are not just forms and statistics and claims for compensation. They're alive, they're packed with drama, with twisted hopes and crooked dreams. A claims man, Walter, is a doctor and a blood-hound and a cop and a judge and a jury and a father confessor, all in one.

The telephone rings on Neff's desk. Automatically Keyes grabs the phone and answers.

KEYES: Who? Okay, hold the line.

He puts the phone down on the desk and continues to Neff:

KEYES: And you want to tell me you're not interested. You don't want to work with your brains. All you want to work with is your finger on a doorbell. For a few bucks more a week. There's a dame on your phone.

Neff picks the phone up and answers.

NEFF: Walter Neff speaking.

B-17 INT. PHONE BOOTH - MARKET

Phyllis is on the phone.

PHYLLIS: I had to call you, Walter. It's terribly urgent. Are you with somebody?

B-18 NEFF'S OFFICE

Neff on the phone. His eye catches Keyes', who is walking up and down.

NEFF: Of course I am. Can't I call you back ... Margie?

B-19 PHYLLIS - ON PHONE

PHYLLIS: Walter, I've only got a minute. It can't wait. Listen. He's going tonight. On the train. Are you listening, Walter? Walter!

B-20 NEFF - ON PHONE

His eyes are on Keyes. He speaks into the phone as calmly as possible.

NEFF: I'm listening. Only make it short... Margie.

B-21 PHYLLIS - ON PHONE

PHYLLIS: He's on crutches. The doctor says he can go if he's careful. The change will do him good. It's wonderful, Walter. Just the way you wanted it. Only with the crutches it's ever so much better, isn't it?

B-22 NEFF'S OFFICE

Neff on phone.

NEFF: One hundred percent better. Hold the line a minute.

He covers the receiver with his hand and turns to Keyes, who is now standing at the window.

NEFF: Suppose I join you in your office, Keyes --

(Continued)

B-22 (cont'd)

He makes a gesture as if expecting Keyes to leave. Keyes stays right where he is.

KEYES: I'll wait. Only tell Margie not to take all day.

Neff looks at Keyes' back with a strained expression, then lifts the phone again.

NEFF: Go ahead.

B-23 PHYLLIS, ON PHONE

PHYLLIS: It's the ten-fifteen from Glendale. I'm driving him. Is it still that same dark street?

B-24 NEFF, ON PHONE

He is still watching Keyes cautiously.

NEFF: Yeah -- sure.

B-24a CLOSEUP - PHYLLIS - ON PHONE

PHYLLIS: The signal is three honks on the horn. Is there anything else?

B-24b CLOSEUP NEFF, ON PHONE

NEFF: What color did you pick out?

B-25 PHYLLIS, ON PHONE

PHYLLIS: Color?

(She catches on)

Oh, sure. The blue suit, Walter. Navy blue. And the cast on his left leg.

B-26 NEFF, ON PHONE

NEFF: Navy blue. I like that fine.

B-27 PHYLLIS, ON PHONE

PHYLLIS: This is it, Walter. I'm shaking like a leaf. But it's straight down the line now for both of us. I love you, Walter. Goodbye.

B-28 NEFF'S OFFICE

Neff on the phone.

(Continued)

B-28 (Cont'd)

NEFF: So long, Margie.

He hangs up. His mouth is grim, but he forces a smile as Keyes turns.

NEFF: I'm sorry, Keyes.

KEYES: What's the matter? The dames chasing you again? Or still? Or is it none of my business?

NEFF: (With a sour smile) If I told you it was a customer --

KEYES: Margie! I bet she drinks from the bottle. Why don't you settle down and get married, Walter?

NEFF: Why don't you, for instance?

KEYES: I almost did, once. A long time ago.

Neff gets up from his desk.

NEFF: Look, Keyes, I've got a prospect to call on.

Keyes drives right ahead.

KEYES: We even had the church all picked out, the dame and I. She had a white satin dress with flounces on it. And I was on my way to the jewelry store to buy the ring. Then suddenly that little man in here started working on me.

He punches his stomach with his fist.

NEFF: So you went back and started investigating her. That it?

Keyes nods slowly, a little sad and a little ashamed.

KEYES: And the stuff that came out. She'd been dyeing her hair ever since she was sixteen. And there was a manic-depressive in her family, on her mother's side. And she already had one husband, a professional pool player in Baltimore. And as for her brother --

NEFF: I get the general idea. She was a tramp from a long line of tramps.

(Continued)

B-28 (Cont'd)

He picks up some papers impatiently.

KEYES: All right, I'm going. What am I to say to Norton? How about that job I want you for?

NEFF: I don't think I want it. Thanks, Keyes, just the same.

KEYES: Fair enough. Just get this: I picked you for the job, not because I think you're so darn smart, but because I thought maybe you were a shade less dumb than the rest of the outfit. I guess I was all wet. You're not smarter, Walter. You're just a little taller.

He goes out. Neff is alone. He watches the door close, then turns and goes slowly to the water cooler. He fills a paper cup and stands holding it. His thoughts are somewhere else. After a moment he absently throws the cupful of water into the receptacle under the cooler. He goes back to the desk. . . . . He takes his rate book out of his brief case and puts it on the desk. He buttons the top button of his shirt, and pulls his tie right. He leaves the office, with his briefcase under his arm.

NEFF'S VOICE
That was it, Keyes, and there was no use kidding myself any more. Those fates I was talking about had only been stalling me off. Now they had thrown the switch. The gears had meshed. The machinery had started to move and nothing could stop it. The time for thinking had all run out. From here on it was a question of following the time table, move by move, just as we had it rehearsed. I wanted my time all accounted for for the rest of the afternoon and up to the last possible moment in the evening. So I arranged to call on a prospect in Pasadena about a public liability bond. When I left the office I put my rate book on the desk as if I had forgotten it. That was part of the alibi.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-29 EXT. NEFF'S APT. HOUSE
DAY

Neff's coupe comes down the street and swings into the garage and goes down the ramp into the basement.

NEFF'S VOICE
I got home about seven and drove right into the garage. This was another item to establish my alibi.

B-30 INT. GARAGE

There are about eight cars parked. A colored attendant in coveralls and rubber boots is washing a car with a hose and sponge. Neff's car comes into the shot and stops near the attendant. Neff gets out with his briefcase under his arm.

ATTENDANT: Hiya there, Mr. Neff.

NEFF: How about a wash job on my heap, Charlie?

ATTENDANT: How soon you want it, Mr. Neff? I got two cars ahead of you.

NEFF: Anytime you get to it, Charlie. I'm staying in tonight.

ATTENDANT: Okay, Mr. Neff. Be all shined up for you in the morning.

Neff is crossing to the elevator. He speaks back over his shoulder:

NEFF: That left front tire looks a little soft. Check it, will you?

ATTENDANT: You bet. Check 'em all round. Always do.

Neff enters the elevator.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-31 NEFF'S APT. - (DAY)

Neff enters. He walks straight to the phone, dials, and starts speaking into the mouthpiece, but only the COMMENTARY is heard.

NEFF'S VOICE
Up in my apartment I called Lou Schwartz, one of the salesmen that shared my office. He lived in Westwood. That made it a toll call and there'd be a record of it. I told him I had forgotten my rate book and needed some dope on the public liability bond I was figuring. I asked him to call me back. This was another item in my alibi, so that later on I could prove that I had been home.

DISSOLVE:

B-32 INT. NEFF'S LIVING ROOM

Neff comes into the living room from the bedroom, putting on the jacket of his blue suit. THE PHONE RINGS. He picks up the receiver and starts talking, unheard, as before. He makes notes on a pad.

NEFF'S VOICE
I changed into a navy blue suit like Dietrichson was going to wear. Lou Schwartz called me back and gave me a lot of figures. . . . . .

DISSOLVE TO:

B-33 NEFF

He is folding a hand towel and stuffing it into his jacket pocket. He then takes a large roll of adhesive tape and puts that into his pants pocket.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-34 & B-35 INSERTS OF OPEN TELEPHONE BELL BOX (ON BASEBOARD) & DOORBELL (ABOVE ENTRANCE DOOR)

Neff's hand places a small card against the bell clapper in each of these.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-36 FIRE STAIRS, APT. HOUSE (NIGHT)

CAMERA PANS with Neff going down the stairs in his blue suit, with a hat pulled down over his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-37 EXT. DIETRICHSON HOME - (NIGHT) - LONG SHOT - NO TRAFFIC

Some windows are lit. Neff comes into the shot and approaches cautiously. He looks around and then slides open the garage door.

B-38 INT. GARAGE

Neff closes the garage door. Very faint light comes in at a side window. He opens the rear door of the sedan, gets in and closes the door after him. The dark interior of the car has swallowed him up.

NEFF'S VOICE (Cont'd)

I stuffed a hand towel and a big roll of adhesive tape into my pockets, so I could fake something that looked like a cast on a broken leg. . . Next I fixed the telephone and the doorbell, so that the cards would fall down if the bells rang. That way I would know there had been a phone call or visitor while I was away. I left the apartment house by the fire stairs and side door. Nobody saw me. It was already getting dark. I took the Vermont Avenue bus to Los Feliz and walked from there up to the Dietrichsen house. There was that smell of honeysuckle again, only stronger, now that it was evening.

NEFF'S VOICE

Then I was in the garage. His car was backed in, just the way I told Phyllis to have it. It was so still

(Continued)

B-38 (Cont'd)

NEFF'S VOICE (Cont'd)
I could hear the ticking of the clock on the dashboard. I kept thinking of the place we had picked out to do it, that dark street on the way to the station, and the three honks on the horn that were to be the signal ... About ten minutes later they came down.

B-39 EXT. DIETRICHSON HOUSE

The front door has opened and Dietrichson is halfway down the steps. He is walking with crutches, wearing the dark blue suit and a hat. The cast is on his left leg. There is no shoe on his left foot. Only the white plaster shows. Phyllis comes after him, carrying his suitcase and his overcoat. She wears a camel's-hair coat and no hat. She catches up with him.

PHYLLIS: You all right, honey? I'll have the car out in a second.

Dietrichson just grunts. She passes him to the garage, CAMERA WITH HER, and slides the door open.

B-40 INT. GARAGE

THE CAMERA IS VERY LOW INSIDE THE SEDAN, shooting slightly upwards from Neff's hiding place. The garage door has just been opened. Phyllis comes to the car, opens the rear door. She looks down, almost INTO THE CAMERA. A tight, cool smile flashes across her face. Then, very calmly, she puts the suitcase and overcoat in back on the seat (out of shot). She closes the door again.

B-41 EXT. GARAGE

Dietrichson stands watching Phyllis as she gets into the car and drives out to pick him up. She stops beside him and opens the right-hand door. Dietrichson climbs in with difficulty. She helps him, watching him closely.

PHYLLIS: Take it easy, honey. We've got lots of time.

(Continued)

B-41 (Cont'd)

DIETRICHSON: Just let me do it my own way. Grab that crutch.

She takes one of the crutches from him.

DIETRICHSON: They ought to make these things so they fold up.

For a moment, as he leans his hand on the back of the seat, there is danger that he may see Neff. He doesn't. He slides awkwardly into the seat and pulls the second crutch in after him. He closes the door. The car moves off.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-42 INT. CAR

Phyllis driving and Dietrichson beside her, face TOWARDS THE CAMERA. Dietrichson has a partly smoked cigar between his teeth. They are in the middle of a conversation.

DIETRICHSON: Aw, stop squawkin' can't you, Phyllis? No man takes his wife along to a class reunion. That's what class reunions are for.

PHYLLIS: Mrs. Tucker went along with her husband last year, didn't she.

DIETRICHSON: Yeah, and what happened to her? She sat in the hotel lobby for four days straight. Never even saw the guy until we poured him back on the train.

B-43 CLOSEUP ON NEFF'S FACE LOW DOWN IN THE CORNER BEHIND MR. DIETRICHSON

His face is partly covered by the edge of a traveling rug which he has pulled up over him. He looks up at Dietrichson and Phyllis in the front seat.

PHYLLIS VOICE: All right, honey. Just so long as you have a good time.

DIETRICHSON'S VOICE: I won't do much dancing, I can tell you that.

B-44 HEADS & SHOULDERS OF DIETRICHSON & PHYLLIS - AS SEEN BY NEFF

PHYLLIS: Remember what the doctor said. If you get careless you might end up with a shorter leg.

B-44 (Cont'd)

DIETRICHSON: So what? I could break the other one and match them up again.

PHYLLIS: It makes you feel pretty good to get away from me, doesn't it?

B-45 PHYLLIS & DIETRICHSON - FACING CAMERA

DIETRICHSON: It's only for four days. I'll be back Monday at the latest.

PHYLLIS: Don't forget we're having the Hobeys for dinner on Monday.

DIETRICHSON: The Hobeys? We had them last. They owe us a dinner, don't they?

PHYLLIS: Maybe they do but I've already asked them for Monday.

DIETRICHSON: Well, I don't want to feed the Hobeys.

B-46 CLOSEUP - PHYLLIS' FACE ONLY

There is a look of tension in her eyes now. She glances around quickly. The car has reached the dark street Neff and she picked out.

DIETRICHSON'S VOICE: And I don't want to eat at their house either. The food you get there, and that rope he hands out for cigars. Call if off, can't you?

Phyllis does not answer. She doesn't even breathe. Her hand goes down on the horn button. She honks three times.

DIETRICHSON'S VOICE: What are you doing that for? What the --

This is as far as his voice will ever get. It breaks off and dies down in a muffled groan. There are struggling noises and a dull sound of something breaking. Phyllis drives on and never turns her head. She stares straight in front of her. Her teeth are clenched.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-47 PARKING SPACE ADJOINING GLENDALE STATION - NIGHT

The station is visible about sixty yards away. There is no parking attendant. Ten or twelve cars are parked diagonally, not crowded. The train is not in yet, but there is activity around the station. Passengers and their friends, redcaps and baggage men, news vendors, etc.

B-47 (Cont'd)

The Dietrichson sedan drives into the shot past CAMERA and parks in the foreground at the outer end of the line, several spaces from the next car, facing away from the CAMERA. Both front doors are open. Phyllis gets out and from the other side crutches emerge, and a man (seen entirely from behind, and apparently Dietrichson) climbs out awkwardly. While he is steadying himself on the ground with the crutches, Phyllis has taken out Dietrichson's suitcase and overcoat. She walks around the car and rolls up the right front window. She closes and locks the car door. She tries the right rear door and takes a last look into the dim interior of the car. Then she and the man walk slowly away from the car to the end of the station platform and along it toward the station building. Phyllis walks several steps ahead of the man.

B-48 PHYLLIS & THE MAN - WALKING

CAMERA FOLLOWING THEM, a little to one side, so that Phyllis is clearly seen but the man's face is not.

MAN: (In a subdued voice)
You handle the redcap and the conductor.

PHYLLIS: Don't worry.

MAN: Keep them away from me as much as you can. I don't want to be helped.

PHYLLIS: I said don't worry, Walter.

B-49 PHYLLIS & THE MAN, WALKING DOWN PLATFORM, CAMERA NOW PRECEDING THEM

Only at this point is it quite clear that THE MAN IS NEFF

NEFF: You start just as soon as the train leaves. At the dairy sign you turn off the highway onto the dirt road. From there it's exactly eight-tenths of a mile to the dump beside the tracks. Remember?

PHYLLIS: I remember everything.

NEFF: You'll be there a little ahead of the train. No speeding. You don't want any cops stopping you -- with him in the back.

PHYLLIS: Walter, we've been through all that so many times.

B-49 (Cont'd)

NEFF: When you turn off the highway, cut all your lights. I'm going to be back on the observation platform. I'll drop off as close to the spot as I can. Wait for the train to pass, then blink your lights twice.

Phyllis nods. They go on. Over them is heard the noise of the train coming into the station and its lights are seen.

B-50 GLENDALE STATION PLATFORM

The train is just coming to a stop. The passengers move forward to the tracks. Phyllis, carrying the suitcase and overcoat, and Neff, still a little behind her, come TOWARDS THE CAMERA. A redcap sees them and runs up. He takes the suitcase out of Phyllis' hand.

REDCAP: San Francisco train, lady?

Phyllis takes an envelope containing Dietrichson's ticket from the pocket of the overcoat. She reads from the envelope.

PHYLLIS: Car nine, section eleven. Just my husband going.

REDCAP: Car nine, section eleven. Yessum, this way please.

Phyllis hands the overcoat to the redcap, who leads her and Neff towards car number nine. Neff still hangs back and keeps his head down, the way a man using crutches might naturally do.

B-51 EXT. CAR #9
B-52
B-53 The pullman conductor and porter stand at the steps. The conductor is checking the tickets of passengers getting on. The redcap leads Phyllis and Neff into the SHOT. The conductor and porter see Neff on his crutches and move to help him.

PHYLLIS: It's all right, thanks. My husband doesn't like to be helped.

The redcap goes up the steps into the car. Neff laboriously swings himself up onto the box and from there up on the steps, keeping his head down. Meantime, Phyllis is holding the attention of the conductor and porter by showing them the ticket.

CONDUCTOR: Car nine, section eleven. The gentleman only. Thank you.

Phyllis nods and takes the ticket back. Neff has reached the top of the steps. She goes up after him and gives him the ticket. They are now close together.

(Continued)

B-51 (Cont'd)
B-52
B-53

PHYLLIS: Goodbye, honey. Take awful good care of yourself with that leg.

NEFF: Sure, I will. Just you take it easy going home.

PHYLLIS: I'll miss you, honey.

She kisses him. There are shouts of "ALL ABOARD". The redcap comes from inside the car.

REDCAP: Section eleven, suh.

Phyllis takes a quarter from her bag and gives it to the redcap.

PORTER: (Shouting) All aboard!

Redcap descends. Phyllis kisses Neff again quickly.

PHYLLIS: Good luck, honey.

She runs down the steps. The porter picks up the box. He and the conductor get on board the train. Phyllis stands there waving goodbye as the train starts moving, and the porter begins to close the car door. Phyllis turns and walks out of the shot in the direction of the parked car.

B-54 INT. PLATFORM CAR NUMBER NINE - MOVING TRAIN - (NIGHT) - DIM LIGHT

Neff and the Porter. The conductor is going on into the car. Neff is half turned away from the porter.

NEFF: Can you make up my berth right away?

PORTER: Yes, sir.

NEFF: I'm going back to the observation car for a smoke.

PORTER: This way, sir. Three cars back.

He holds the vestibule door open. Neff hobbles through.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-55 INT. PULLMAN CAR - DIM

Most of the berths are made up. As Neff hobbles along, another porter and some passengers make way for the crippled man solicitously.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-56 PLATFORM BETWEEN TWO CARS - VERY DIM

The train conductor meets Neff and opens the door for him. Neff hobbles on through.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-57 INT. PARLOR CAR - MOVING TRAIN

Four or five passengers are reading or writing. As Neff comes through on his crutches they pull in their feet to make room for him. One old lady, seeing that he is headed for the observation platform, opens the door for him. He thanks her with a nod and hobbles through.

B-58 OBSERVATION PLATFORM

Dark except for a little light coming from inside the parlor car. The train is going at about fifteen miles an hour between Glendale and Burbank. Neff has come out and hobbled to the railing. He stands looking back along the rails. SUDDENLY A MAN'S VOICE speaks from behind him.

MAN'S VOICE: Can I pull a chair out for you?

Neff looks around. He sees a man sitting in the corner smoking a hand-rolled cigarette. He is about fifty-five years old, with white hair, and a broad-brimmed Stetson hat. He looks like a small town lawyer or maybe a mining man. Neff does not like the man's presence there very much. He turns to him just enough to answer.

NEFF: No thanks, I'd rather stand.

MAN: You going far?

NEFF: Palo Alto.

MAN: My name's Jackson. I'm going all the way to Medford. Medford, Oregon. Had a broken arm myself once.

NEFF: Uh-huh.

JACKSON: That darn cast sure itches something fierce, don't it? I thought I'd go crazy with mine.

Neff stands silent. His mind is feverishly thinking of how to get rid of Jackson.

JACKSON: Palo Alto's a nice little town. You a Stanford man?

B-58 (Cont'd)

NEFF: Used to be.

He starts patting his pockets as if looking for something.

JACKSON: I bet you left something behind. I always do.

NEFF: My cigar case. Must have left it in my overcoat back in the section.

Jackson takes out a small bag of tobacco and a packet of cigarette papers.

JACKSON: Care to roll yourself a cigarette, Mr. --- ?

NEFF: Dietrichson. Thanks. I really prefer cigars.
(Looking around)
Maybe the porter ---

JACKSON: I could get your cigars for you. Be glad to, Mr. Dietrichson.

NEFF: That's darn nice of you. It's car nine, section eleven. If you're sure it's not too much trouble.

JACKSON: Car nine, section eleven. A pleasure.

He rises and exits into the parlor car. Neff turns slowly and watches Jackson go back through the car. Then he moves to one side of the platform and looks ahead along the track to orientate himself. He gives one last glance back into the parlor car to make sure no one is watching him. He slips the crutches from under his arms and stands on both feet. He drops the crutches off the train onto the tracks, then quickly swings his body over the rail.

B-59 EXT. MOVING OBSERVATION CAR - CAMERA FOLLOWING

Neff is hanging onto the railing. He looks down, then lets go and drops to the right-of-way. THE CAMERA STOPS. The train recedes slowly into the night. Neff has fallen on the tracks. He picks himself up, rubs one knee and looks back along the line of the tracks and off to one side.

B-60 DARK LANDSCAPE - RAILROAD TRACKS

Close beyond the edge of the right-of-way, the silhouette of a dump shows up. Beside it looms the dark bulk of the Dietrichson sedan. The headlights blink twice and go out.

B-61 NEFF

He starts running towards the car. He runs a little awkwardly because of the improvised cast on his left foot.

B-62 CAR IN THE DARK

The front door opens and Phyllis steps out. She closes the door and looks in the direction of the tracks. The uneven steps of Neff running towards her are heard. She opens the back door of the car and leans in. She pulls the rug off the corpse (which is not visible) and stands looking into the car, unable to take her eyes off what she sees, while at the same time her hands mechanically begin to fold the rug. The running steps grow louder and Neff comes into the SHOT breathing hard. He reaches her.

NEFF: Okay. This has to go fast. Take his hat and pick up the crutches.

Neff points back towards the tracks. He reaches into the car and begins to drag out the body by the armpits. Phyllis coolly reaches past him and takes the hat off the dead man's head. She turns to go.

NEFF: Hang on to that rug. I'll need it.

Phyllis moves out of the shot carrying the hat and rug.

B-63 NEFF

He gets a stronger hold on the dead Dietrichson and drags him free of the car and towards the tracks. The corpse is not seen.

B-64 PHYLLIS

She has reached the point where one of the crutches lies. She picks it up and goes for the other crutch a short distance away. She carries both crutches, the hat and the rug towards Neff.

B-65 NEFF

He has reached the railroad tracks. The corpse is lying beside the tracks, face down. Phyllis comes up to Neff. He takes the crutches and the hat from her. He throws the crutches beside the corpse. He takes the hat from Phyllis and tosses it carelessly along the track.

NEFF: Let's go. Stay behind me.

B-65 (Cont'd)

He takes the rug from her and they move back towards the car, Phyllis first, then Neff walking almost backwards, sweeping the ground over which the body was dragged with the rug as they go.

B-66 THE CAR

They reach it together.

NEFF: Get in. You drive.

She gets in. Neff sweeps the ground after him as he goes around the car to get in beside her. He throws the rug into the back of the car.

B-67 INT. CAR

Phyllis is behind the wheel. Neff beside her is just closing the door. He props his wrapped foot against the dashboard and begins to tear off the adhesive tape while at the same time Phyllis presses the starter button. The starter grinds, but the motor doesn't catch. She tries again. It still doesn't catch. Neff looks at her. She tries a third time. The starter barely turns over. The battery is very low.

Phyllis leans back. They stare at each other desperately. After a moment Neff bends forward slowly and turns the ignition key to the OFF position. He holds his left thumb poised over the starter button. There is a breathless moment. Then he presses the starter button with swift decision. The starter grinds with nerve-wracking sluggishness. Neff twists the ignition key to ON and instantly pulls the hand-throttle wide open. With a last feeble kick of the starter, the motor catches and races. He eases the throttle down and slides back into his place. They look at each other again. The tenseness of the moment still shows in their faces.

NEFF: Let's go, baby.

Phyllis releases the hand brake and puts the car in reverse. Neff is again busy unwrapping the tape from his leg. The car moves.

B-68 DARK LANDSCAPE - WITH DUMP

The car, with the headlights out, backs up, swings around and moves off along the dirt road the way it came.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-69 INT. SEDAN - DRIVING ALONG HIGHWAY IN TRAFFIC

Phyllis and Neff facing towards CAMERA. Neff is bent over, peeling the towel and plaster off his foot, which is out of shot. Phyllis is calm, almost relaxed. Neff straightens up. They are talking to each other. Their lips are seen moving but what they say is not heard.

They stop talking. Phyllis stares straight ahead. Neff is pulling adhesive tape off the wrapped towel that was on his foot. He folds the adhesive into a tight ball, rolls the towel up, puts both into his pockets.

DISSOLVE TO:

NEFF'S VOICE
On the way back we went over once more what she was to do at the inquest, if they had one, and about the insurance, when that came up.

I was afraid she might go to pieces a little, now that we had done it, but she was perfect. No nerves. Not a tear, not even a blink of the eyes....

B-70 DARK STREET NEAR NEFF'S APT. HOUSE

The sedan drives into the shot and stops without pulling over to the curb.

She dropped me a block from my apartment house.

The car door opens. Neff starts to get out.

PHYLLIS: Walter.

Neff turns back to her.

PHYLLIS: What's the matter, Walter. Aren't you going to kiss me?

NEFF: Sure, I'm going to kiss you.

Phyllis bends towards him and puts her arms around him.

PHYLLIS: It's straight down the line, isn't it?

Phyllis kisses him. In the kiss he is passive.

PHYLLIS: I love you, Walter.

NEFF: I love you, baby.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-71 FIRE STAIRS - (NIGHT)

Neff going up.

NEFF'S VOICE

It was two minutes past eleven as I went up the fire stairs again. Nobody saw me this time either.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-72 INSERTS
B-73

Telephone bell box and the door bell. The cards are still in position. Neff's hand takes them out.

In the apartment I checked the bells. The cards hadn't moved No calls. No visitors.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-74 LIVING ROOM - NEFF'S APT. NIGHT - ELECTRIC LIGHTS ON

Neff comes from the bedroom, wearing the light grey suit he wore before the murder, only without a tie. He buttons his jacket, looks around the room, and opens the corridor door.

I changed the blue suit. There was one last thing to do. I wanted the garage man to see me again.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-75 BASEMENT GARAGE - (NIGHT)

Fifteen or twenty cars are parked now. Charlie, the attendant has washed Neff's car and is now polishing the glass and metal work. Neff comes from the elevator. Charlie sees him. He straightens up.

CHARLIE: You going to need it after all, Mr. Neff? I'm about through.

NEFF: It's okay, Charlie. Just walking down to the drug store for something to eat. Been working upstairs all evening. My stomach's getting sore at me.

He walks up the ramp towards the garage entrance.

B-76 STREET OUTSIDE APT. HOUSE - (NIGHT) - SHOOTING TOWARDS GARAGE ENTRANCE

Neff comes out at the top of the ramp and starts to walk down the street, not too fast. CAMERA PRECEDES HIM. He walks about ten or fifteen yards. At first his steps sound hard and distinct on the sidwalk and echo in the deserted street. But slowly, as he goes on, they fade into utter silence. He walks a few feet without sound, then becomes aware of the silence. He stops rigidly and looks back. CAMERA STOPS WITH HIM. He stands like that for a moment, then turns toward the CAMERA again. There is a look of horror on his face now. He walks on, CAMERA AHEAD OF HIM again. Still his steps make no sound.

NEFF'S VOICE

That was all there was to it. Nothing had slipped, nothing had been overlooked, there was nothing to give us away. And yet, Keyes, as I was walking down the street to the drug store, suddenly it came over me that everything would go wrong. It sounds crazy, Keyes, but it's true, so help me: I couldn't hear my own footsteps. It was the walk of a dead man.

FADE OUT:

END OF SEQUENCE "B"

SEQUENCE "C"

FADE IN:

C-1 NEFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Neff sits before the dictaphone. There are four cylinders on end on the desk next to him. He gets up from the swivel chair with great effort and stands a moment unsteadily. The wound in his shoulder is paining him. He is very weak as he slowly crosses to the water coller. He takes the blood stained handkerchief from inside his shirt and soaks it with fresh water.

The office door opens behind him. He turns, hiding the handkerchief behind his back. In the doorway stands the colored man who has been cleaning up downstairs. He is carrying his big trash box by a rope handle.

COLORED MAN: Didn't know anybody was here, Mr. Neff. We ain't cleaned your office yet.

NEFF: Let it go tonight. I'm busy.

COLORED MAN: Whatever you say, Mr. Neff.

He closes the door slowly, staring at Neff with an expression. Neff puts the soaked handkerchief back on the wounded shoulder, then walks heavily over to his chair and lowers himself into it. He takes the dictaphone and speaks into it again.

NEFF: That was the longest night I ever lived through, Keyes, and the next day was worse, when the story broke in the papers, and they were talking about it at the office, and the day after that when you started digging into it. I kept my hands in my pockets because I thought they were shaking, and I put on dark glasses so people couldn't see my eyes, and then I took them off again so people wouldn't get to wondering why I wore them. I was trying to hold myself together, but I could feel my nerves pulling me to pieces....

DISSOLVE TO:

C-2 INSURANCE OFFICE - TWELFTH FLOOR - DAY

Neff comes through the reception room doors with his hat on and his briefcase under his arm. He walks towards his office, but half way there he runs into Keyes. Keyes is wearing his

C-2 (Cont'd)

vest and hat, no coat. He is carrying a file of papers and smoking a cigar.

KEYES: Come on, Walter. The big boss wants to see us.

NEFF: Okay.

He turns and walks beside Keyes, CAMERA AHEAD of them

NEFF: That Dietrichson case?

KEYES: Must be.

NEFF: Anything wrong?

KEYES: The guy's dead, we had him insured and it's going to cost us money. That's always wrong.

He stops by a majolica jar full of sand and takes a pencil from his vest. He stands over the jar extinguishing his cigar carefully so as not to damage it.

NEFF: What have you got so far?

KEYES: Autopsy report. No heart failure, no apoplexy, no predisposing medical cause of any kind. He died of a broken neck.

NEFF: When is the inquest?

KEYES: They had it this morning. His wife and daughter made the identification. The train people and some passengers told how he went through to the observation car. It was all over in forty-five minutes. Verdict, accidental death.

Keyes puts the half-smoked cigar into his vest pocket with the pencil. They move on.

NEFF: What do the police figure?

KEYES: That he got tangled up in his crutches and fell off the train. They're satisfied. It's not their dough.

They stop at a door lettered in embossed chromium letters: EDWARD S. NORTON, JR. PRESIDENT. Keyes opens the door. They go in.

C-3 INT. RECEPTION ROOM - MR. NORTON'S OFFICE

A secretary sitting behind a desk. As Keyes and Neff enter, the door to Norton's private office is opened. From inside, Mr. Norton is letting out three legal looking gentlemen. Norton is about forty-five, very well groomed, rather pompous in manner.

NORTON: (To the men who are leaving)
I believe the legal position is now clear, gentlemen. Please stand by. I may need you later.

He sees Keyes and Neff.

NORTON: Come in, Mr. Keyes. You too, Mr. Neff.

Neff has put down his hat and briefcase. He and Keyes pass the legal looking men and follow Norton into his office.

C-4 INT. NORTON'S OFFICE

Naturally it is the best office in the building; modern but not modernistic, spacious, very well furnished; flowers, smoking stands, easy chairs, etc. Norton has gone behind his desk. Keyes has come in, and Neff after him closes the door quietly. Norton looks disapprovingly at Keyes' shirt sleeves.

NORTON: You find this an uncomfortably warm day Mr. Keyes?

Keyes takes his hat off but holds it in his hands.

KEYES: Sorry, Mr. Norton. I didn't know this was formal.

Norton smiles frostily.

NORTON: Sit down, gentlemen.
(To Keyes)
Any new developments?

Keyes and Neff sit down, Norton remains standing.

KEYES: I just talked to this Jackson long distance. Up in Medford, Oregon.

NORTON: Who's Jackson?

KEYES: The last guy that saw Dietrichson alive. They were out on the observation platform together talking. Dietrichson wanted a cigar and Jackson went to get Dietrichson's cigar case for him. When he came back to the observation platform, no Dietrichson. Jackson didn't think anything was wrong until a wire caught up with the train at Santa Barbara. They had found Dietrichson's body on the tracks near Burbank.

(Continued)

C-4 (Cont'd)

NORTON: Very interesting, about the cigar case.

He walks up and down behind his desk thinking hard.

NORTON: Anything else?

KEYES: Not much. Dietrichson's secretary says she didn't know anything about the policy. There is a daughter, but all she remembers is Neff talking to her father about accident insurance at their house one night.

NEFF: I couldn't sell him at first. Mrs. Dietrichson opposed it. He told me he'd think it over. Later on I went down to the oil fields and closed him. He signed the application and gave me his check.

NORTON: (Dripping with sarcasm)
A fine piece of salesmanship that was, Mr. Neff.

KEYES: There's no sense in pushing Neff around. He's got the best sales record in the office. Are your salesmen supposed to know that the customer is going to fall off a train?

NORTON: Fall off a train? Are we sure Dietrichson fell off the train?

There is a charged pause.

KEYES: I don't get it.

NORTON: You don't, Mr. Keyes? Then what do you think of this case? This policy might cost us a great deal of money. As you know, it contains a double indemnity clause. Just what is your opinion?

KEYES: No opinion at all.

NORTON: Not even a hunch? One of those interesting little hunches of yours?

KEYES: Nope. Not even a hunch.

NORTON: I'm surprised, Mr. Keyes. I've formed a very definite opinion. I think I know -- in fact I know I know what happened to Dietrichson.

C-4 (Cont'd)

KEYES: You know you know what?

NORTON: I know it was not an accident.

He looks from Keyes to Neff and back to Keyes.

NORTON: What do you say to that?

KEYES: Me? You've got the ball. Let's see you run with it.

NORTON: There's a widespread feeling that just because a man has a large office --

The dictograph on his desk buzzes. He reaches over and depresses a key and puts the earpiece to his ear.

NORTON: (Into dictograph)
Yes?...Have her come in, please.

He replaces the earpiece. He turns back to Keyes and Neff.

NORTON: -- that just because a man has a large office he must be an idiot. I'm having a visitor, if you don't mind.

Keyes and Neff start to get up.

NORTON: No, no. I want you to stay and watch me handle this.

The secretary has opened the door.

SECRETARY: Mrs. Dietrichson.

Neff stands staring at the door. He relaxes with an obvious effort of will. Phyllis comes in. She wears a gray tailored suit, small black hat with a veil, black gloves, and carries a black bag. The secretary closes the door behind her. Mr. Norton goes to meet her.

NORTON: Thank you very much for coming, Mrs. Dietrichson. I assure you I appreciate it.

He turns a little towards Keyes.

NORTON: This is Mr. Keyes.

KEYES: How do you do.

PHYLLIS: How do you do.

C-4 (Cont'd)

NORTON: And Mr. Neff.

PHYLLIS: I've met Mr. Neff. How do you do.

Norton has placed a chair. Phyllis sits. Norton goes behind his desk.

NORTON: Mrs. Dietrichson, I assure you of our sympathy in your bereavement. I hesitated before asking you to come here so soon after your loss.

Phyllis nods silently.

NORTON: But now that you're here I hope you won't mind if I plunge straight into business. You know why we asked you to come, don't you?

PHYLLIS: No. All I know is that your secretary made it sound very urgent.

Keyes sits quietly in his chair with his legs crossed. He has hung his hat on his foot and thrust his thumbs in the armholes of his vest. He looks a little bored. Neff, behind him, stands leaning against the false mantel, completely dead-pan.

NORTON: Your husband had an accident policy with this company. Evidently you don't know that, Mrs. Dietrichson.

PHYLLIS: No. I remember some talk at the house --

She looks towards Neff.

PHYLLIS: -- but he didn't seem to want it.

NEFF: He took it out a few days later, Mrs. Dietrichson.

PHYLLIS: I see.

NORTON: You'll probably find the policy among his personal effects.

PHYLLIS: His safe deposit box hasn't been opened yet. It seems a tax examiner has to be present.

C-4 (Cont'd)

NORTON: Please, Mrs. Dietrichson, I don't want you to think you are being subjected to any questioning. But there are a few things we should like to know.

PHYLLIS: What sort of things?

NORTON: We have the report of the coroner's inquest. Accidental death. We are not entirely satisfied. In fact we are not satisfied at all.

Phyllis looks at him coolly.
Keyes looks vaguely interested.
Neff is staring straight at Phyllis.

NORTON: Frankly, Mrs. Dietrichson, we suspect suicide.

Phyllis doesn't bat an eyelash.

NORTON: I'm sorry. Would you like a glass of water?

PHYLLIS: Please.

NORTON: Mr. Neff.

He indicates a thermos on a stand near Neff. Neff pours a glass of water and carries it over to Phyllis. She has lifted her veil a little. She takes the glass from his hand.

PHYLLIS: Thank you.

Their eyes meet for a fraction of a second.

NORTON: Had your husband been moody or depressed lately, Mrs. Dietrichson? Did he seem to have financial worries, for instance?

PHYLLIS: He was perfectly all right and I don't know of any financial worries.

NORTON: There must have been s omething, Mrs. Dietrichson. Let us examine this so-called accident. First, your husband takes out this policy in absolute secrecy. Why? Because he doesn't want his family to suspect what he intends to do.

PHYLLIS: Do what?

C-4 (Cont'd)

NORTON: Commit suicide. Next, he goes on this trip entirely alone. He has to be alone. He hobbles all the way out to the observation platform, very unlikely with his leg in a cast, unless he has a very strong reason. Once there, he finds he is not alone. There is a man there. What was his name, Keyes?

Norton flips his fingers impatiently at Keyes who doesn't even bother to look up.

KEYES: His name was Jackson. Probably still is.

NORTON: Jackson. So your husband gets rid of this Jackson with some flimsy excuse about cigars. And then he is alone. And then he does it. He jumps. Suicide. In which case the company is not liable.
(Pause)
You know that, of course. We could go to court --

PHYLLIS: I don't know anything. In fact I don't know why I came here.

She makes as if to rise indignantly.

NORTON: Just a moment, please. I said we could go to court. I didn't say we want to. Not only is it against our practice, but it would involve a great deal of expense, a lot of lawyers, a lot of time, perhaps years.

Phyllis rises coldly.

NORTON: So what I want to suggest is a compromise on both sides. A settlement for a certain sum, a part of the policy value --

PHYLLIS: Don't bother, Mr. Norton. When I came in here I had no idea you owed me any money. You told me you did. Then you told me you didn't. Now you tell me you want to pay me a part of it, whatever it is. You want to bargain with me, at a time like this. I don't like your insinuations about my husband, Mr. Norton, and I don't like your methods. In fact I don't like you, Mr. Norton. Goodbye, gentlema

She turns and walks out. The door closes after her. There is a pregnant pause. Keyes straightens up in his chair.

C-4 (Cont'd)

KEYES: Nice going, Mr. Norton. You sure carried that ball.

Norton pours himself a glass of water and stands holding it.

KEYES: Only you fumbled on the goal line. Then you heaved an illegal forward pass and got thrown for a forty-yard loss. Now you can't pick yourself up because you haven't got a leg to stand on.

NORTON: I haven't eh? Let her claim. Let her sue. We can prove it was suicide.

Keyes stands up.

KEYES: Can we? Mr. Norton, the first thing that hit me was that suicide angle. Only I dropped it in the wastepaper basket just three seconds later. You ought to take a look at the statistics on suicide sometime. You might learn a little something about the insurance business.

NORTON: I was raised in the insurance business, Mr. Keyes.

KEYES: Yeah. In the front office. Come on, you never read an actuarial table in your life. I've got ten volumes on suicide alone. Suicide by race, by color, by occupation, by sex, by seasons of the year, by time of day. Suicide, how committed: by poisons, by fire-arms, by drowning, by leaps. Suicide by poison, subdivided by types of poison, such as corrosive, irritant, systemic, gaseous, narcotic, alkaloid, protein, and so forth. Suicide by leaps, subdivided by leaps from high places, under wheels of trains, under wheels of trucks, under the feet of horses, from steamboats. But Mr. Norton, of all the cases on record there's not one single case of suicide by leap from the rear end of a moving train. And do you know how fast that train was going at the point where the body was found? Fifteen miles an hour. Now how could anybody jump off a slow moving train like that with any kind of expectation that he would kill himself? No soap, Mr. Norton. We're sunk, and we're going to pay through the nose, and you know it. May I have this?

(Continued)

C-4 (Cont'd)

Keyes' throat is dry after the long speech. He grabs the glass of water out of Norton's hand and drains it in one big gulp.

Norton is watching him almost stupefied. Neff stands with the shadow of a smile on his face. Keyes puts the glass down noisily on Norton's desk.

KEYES: Come on, Walter.

Norton doesn't move or speak. Keyes puts his hat on and crosses towards the door, Neff after him. With the door-knob in his hand Keyes turns back to Norton with a glance down at his own shirt sleeves.

KEYES: Next time I'll rent a tuxedo.

They go out.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-5 NEFF - AT DICTAPHONE - (NIGHT)

There is a tired grin on his face as he talks into the horn.

NEFF: I could have hugged you right then and there, Keyes, you and your statistics. You were the only one we were really scared of, and instead you were almost playing on our team...

DISSOLVE TO:

C-6 NEFF'S APARTMENT - EVENING - ALMOST DARK IN THE ROOM

The corridor door opens letting light in. Neff enters with his hat on and his briefcase under his arm. He switches the lights on, closes the door, puts the lights on, closes the door, puts the key in his pocket. At this moment the telephone rings. He picks up the phone.

NEFF'S VOICE: That evening when I got home my nerves had eased off. I could feel the ground under my feet again, and it looked like easy going from there on in.

NEFF: Hello... Hello, baby.... Sure, everything is fine... You were wonderful in Norton's office.

C-7 INT. TELEPHONE BOOTH IN A DRUG STORE

Phyllis is on the phone. She is not dressed as in Norton's office.

C-7 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: I felt so funny. I wanted to look at you all the time.

C-8 NEFF ON TELEPHONE IN HIS APARTMENT

NEFF: How do you think I felt? Where are you, baby?

C-9 PHYLLIS ON PHONE

PHYLLIS: At the drug store. Just a block away. Can I come up?

C-10 NEFF'S APARTMENT - (NIGHT) - NEFF ON PHONE

NEFF: Okay. But be careful. Don't let anybody see you.

He hangs up, takes off his hat and drops hat and briefcase on the davenport. He looks around the room and crosses to lower the venetian blinds and draw the curtains. He gathers up the morning paper which is lying untidily on the floor and puts it in the waste-paper basket.

The door bell rings.

Neff stops in sudden alarm. It can't be Phyllis. The time is too short. For a second he stands there motionless, then crosses to the door and opens it.

In the open door stands Keyes.

NEFF: Hello, Keyes.

Keyes walks past him into the room. His hands are clasped behind his back. There is a strange, absent-minded look in his eyes. Neff closes the door without taking his eyes off Keyes.

NEFF: What's on your mind?

Keyes stops in the middle of the room and turns.

KEYES: That broken leg. The guy broke his leg.

NEFF: What are you talking about?

KEYES: Talking about Dietrichson. He had accident insurance, didn't he? Then he broke his leg, didn't he?

NEFF: So what?

C-10 (Cont'd)

KEYES: And he didn't put in a claim. Why didn't he put in a claim? Why?

NEFF: What the dickens are you driving at?

KEYES: Walter. There's something wrong. I ate dinner two hours ago. It stuck half way.

He prods his stomach with his thumb.

KEYES: The little man is acting up again. Because there's something wrong with that Dietrichson case.

NEFF: Because he didn't put in a claim? Maybe he just didn't have time.

KEYES: Oh maybe he just didn't know he was insured.

He has stopped in front of Neff. They look at each other for a tense moment. Neff hardly breathes.

Keyes shakes his head suddenly.

KEYES: No. That couldn't be it. You delivered the policy to him personally, didn't you, Walter? And you got his check.

NEFF: (Stiff-lipped, but his voice is as well under control as he can manage) Sure, I did.

Keyes prods his stomach again.

KEYES: Got any bicarbonate of soda?

NEFF: No I haven't.

Keyes resumes his pacing.

KEYES: Listen, Walter. I've been living with this little man for twenty-six years. He's never failed me yet. There's got to be something wrong.

NEFF: Maybe Norton was right. Maybe it was suicide, Keyes.

C-10 (Cont'd)

KEYES: No. Not suicide.
(Pause)
But not accident either.

NEFF: What else?

There is another longer pause, agonizing for Neff. Finally Keyes continues:

KEYES: Look. A man takes out an accident policy that is worth a hundred thousand dollars if he is killed on a train. Then, two weeks later, he is killed on a train. And not in a train accident, mind you, but falling off some silly observation car. Do you know what the mathematical probability of that is, Walter? One out of I don't know how many billions. And add to that the broken leg. It just can't be the way it looks, Walter. Something has been worked on us.

NEFF: Such as what?

Keyes doesn't answer. He goes on pacing up and down. Finally Neff can't stand the silence any longer.

NEFF: Murder?

KEYES: (Prods stomach again)
Don't you have any peppermint or anything?

NEFF: I'm sorry.
(Pause)
Who do you suspect?

KEYES: Maybe I like to make things easy for myself. But I always tend to suspect the beneficiary.

NEFF: The wife?

KEYES: Yeah. That wide-eyed dame that didn't know anything about anything.

NEFF: You're crazy, Keyes. She wasn't even on the train.

KEYES: I know she wasn't, Walter. I don't claim to know how it was worked, or who worked it, but I know that it was worked.

C-10 (Cont'd)

He crosses to the corridor door.

KEYES: I've got to get to a drug store. It feels like a hunk of concrete inside me.

He puts his hand on the knob to open the door.

C-11 CORRIDOR - APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT - LIGHTS ON

The hallway is empty except for Phyllis who has been standing close to the door of Huff's apartment, listening. The door has just started to open. Phyllis moves away quickly and flattens herself against the wall behind the opening door. Keyes is coming out.

KEYES: Good night, Walter.

Neff, behind him, looks anxiously down the hallway for Phyllis. Suddenly his eye catches a glimpse of her through the crack of the partly opened door. He pushes the door wide so as to hide her from Keyes.

NEFF: Good night, Keyes.

KEYES: See you at the office in the morning.

He has reached the elevator. He pushes the call button and turns.

KEYES: But I'd like to move in on her right now, tonight, if it wasn't for Norton and his stripe-pants ideas about company policy. I'd have the cops after her so quick her head would spin. They'd put her through the wringer, and, brother, what they would squeeze out.

NEFF: Only you haven't got a single thing to go on, Keyes.

The elevator has come up and stopped.

KEYES: Not too much. Twenty-six years experience, all the percentage there is, and this lump of concrete in my stomach.

He pulls back the elevator door and turns to Neff with one last glance of annoyance.

KEYES: (Almost angrily)
No bicarbonate of soda.

(Continued)

C-11 (Cont'd)

Keyes gets into the elevator. The door closes. The elevator goes down.

Neff stands numb, looking at the spot where Keyss was last visible. Without moving his eyes he pulls the door around towards him with his left hand. Phyllis slowly comes out.

Neff motions quickly to her to go into the apartment. She crosses in front of him and enters. He steps in backwards after her.

C-12 INT. NEFF'S APARTMENT

Phyllis has come a few steps into the room. Neff, backing in after her, closes the door from inside and turns slowly. They look at each other for a long moment in complete silence.

PHYLLIS: How much does he know?

NEFF: It's not what he knows. It's those stinking hunches of his.

PHYLLIS: But he can't prove anything, can he?

NEFF: Not if we're careful. Not if we don't see each other for a while.

PHYLLIS: For how long a while?

She moves toward him but he does not respond.

NEFF: Until all this dies down. You don't know Keyes the way I do. Once he gets his teeth into something he won't let go. He'll investigate you. He'll have you shadowed. He'll watch you every minute from now on. Are you afraid, baby?

PHYLLIS: Yes, I'm afraid. But not of Keyes. I'm afraid of us. We're not the same any more. We did it so we could be together, but instead of that it's pulling us apart. Isn't it, Walter?

NEFF: What are you talking about?

PHYLLIS: And you don't really care whether we see each other or not.

NEFF: Shut up, baby.

He pulls her close and kisses her.

FADE OUT

END OF SEQUENCE "C"

SEQUENCE "D"

FADE IN:

D-1 INSURANCE OFFICE - TWELFTH FLOOR - ANTEROOM - (DAY)

Two telephone operators and a receptionist are at work. Several visitors are waiting in chairs. Lola Dietrichson is one of them. She's wearing a simple black suit and hat, indicating mourning. Her fingers nervously pick at a handkerchief and her eyes are watching the elevator doors anxiously.

(Now and then the telephone operators in the background are heard saying, "PACIFIC ALL-RISK. GOOD AFTERNOON.")

The elevator comes up and the doors open. Several people come out, among them Neff, carrying his briefcase. Lola sees him and stands up, and as he is about to pass through the anteroom without recognizing her she stops him.

LOLA: Hello, Mr. Neff

Neff looks at her a little startled.

NEFF: Hello.

His voice hangs in the air.

LOLA: Lola Dietrichson. Don't you remember me?

NEFF: (On his guard)
Yes. Of course.

LOLA: Could I talk to you, just for a few minutes? Somewhere where we can be alone?

NEFF: Sure. Come on into my office.

He pushes the swing door open and holds it for her. As she passes in front of him his eyes narrow in uneasy speculation.

D-2 TWELFTH FLOOR - BALCONY

Neff comes up level with Lola and leads her towards his office, CAMERA WITH THEM.

NEFF: Is it something to do with -- what happened?

LOLA: Yes, Mr. Neff. It's about my father's death.

D-2 (Cont'd)

NEFF: I'm terribly sorry, Miss Dietrichson.

He opens the door of his office and holds it for her. She enters.

D-3 INT. NEFF'S OFFICE - (DAY)

Lou Schwartz, one of the other salesmen, is working at his desk. Lola enters, Neff after her.

NEFF: (To Schwartz)
Lou, do you mind if I use the office alone for a few minutes?

SCHWARTZ: It's all yours, Walter.

He gets up and goes out. Lola has walked over to the window and is looking out so Schwartz won't stare at her. Neff places a chair beside his desk.

NEFF: Won't you sit down?

At the sound of the closing door she turns and speaks with a catch in her voice.

LOLA: Mr. Neff, I can't help it, but I have such a strange feeling that there is something queer about my father's death.

NEFF: Queer? Queer in what way?

LOLA: I don't know why I should be bothering you with my troubles, except that you knew my father and knew about the insurance he took out. And you were so nice to me that evening in your car.

NEFF: Sure. We got along fine, didn't we.

He sits down. His face is grim and watchful.

LOLA: Look at me, Mr. Neff. I'm not crazy. I'm not hysterical. I'm not even crying. But I have the awful feeling that something is wrong, and I had the same feeling once before - when my mother died.

D-3 (Cont'd)

NEFF: When your mother died?

LOLA: We were up at Lake Arrowhead. That was six years ago. We had a cabin there. It was winter and very cold and my mother was very sick with pneumonia. She had a nurse with her. There were just the three of us in the cabin. One night I got up and went into my mother's room. She was delirious with fever. All the bed covers were on the floor and the windows were wide open. The nurse wasn't in the room. I ran and covered my mother up as quickly as I could. Just then I heard a door open behind me. The nurse stood there. She didn't say a word, but there was a look in her eyes I'll never forget. Two days later my mother was dead.
(Pause)
Do you know who that nurse was?

Neff stares at her tensely. He knows only too well who the nurse was.

NEFF: No. Who?

LOLA: Phyllis. I tried to tell my father, but I was just a kid then and he wouldn't listen to me. Six months later she married him and I kind of talked myself out of the idea that she could have done anything like that. But now it's all back again, now that something has happened to my father, too.

NEFF: You're not making sense, Miss Dietrichson. Your father fell off a train.

LOLA: Yes, and two days before he fell off that train what was Phyllis doing? She was in her room in front of a mirror, with a black hat on, and she was pinning a black veil to it, as if she couldn't wait to see how she would look in mourning.

NEFF: Look. You've had a pretty bad shock. Aren't you just imagining all this?

D-3 (Cont'd)

LOLA: I caught her eyes in the mirror, and they had that look in them they had before my mother died. That same look.

NEFF: You don't like your step-mother, do you? Isn't it just because she is your step-mother?

LOLA: I loathe her. Because she did it. She did it for the money. Only you're not going to pay her, are you, Mr. Neff? She's not going to get away with it this time. I'm going to speak up. I'm going to tell everything I know.

NEFF: You'd better be careful, saying things like that.

LOLA: I'm not afraid. You'll see.

She turns again to the window so he won't see that she is crying. Neff gets up and goes to her.

LOLA: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to act like this.

NEFF: All this that you've been telling me --- who else have you told?

LOLA: No one.

NEFF: How about your step-mother?

LOLA: Of course not. I'm not living in the house any more. I moved out.

NEFF: And you didn't tell that boy-friend of yours? Zacchetti.

LOLA: I'm not seeing him any more. We had a fight.

NEFF: Where are you living then?

LOLA: I got myself a little apartment in Hollywood.

NEFF: Four walls, and you just sit and look at them, huh?

D-3 (Cont'd)

She turns from the window with a pathetic little nod.

LOLA: (Through her tears)
Yes, Mr. Neff.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-4 LA GOLONDRINA (NIGHT)

In the foreground, Neff and Lola are having dinner. In the background the usual activity of Olvera Street -- sidewalk peddlers, guitar players, etc.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-5 INT. NEFF'S COUPE (DAY)

Neff and Lola driving along the beach near Santa Monica. Neff is wearing a light summer suit, very much in contrast to Lola's mourning. Apparently she is telling him a story and now and then she laughs, but there is no sound. CAMERA MOVES PAST HER TO A:

CLOSE SHOT OF NEFF behind the stearing wheel. He is only half listening to Lola. His mind is full of other thoughts.

NEFF'S VOICE

So I took her to dinner that evening at a Mexican joint down on Olvera Street where nobody would see us. I wanted to cheer her up.. Next day was Sunday and we went for a ride down to the beach. She had loosened up a bit and she was even laughing...I had to make sure she wouldn't tell that stuff about Phyllis to anybody else. It was dynamite, whether it was true or not. And I had no chance to talk to Phyllis. You were watching her like a hawk, Keyes. I couldn't even phone her for fear you had the wires tapped.

D-6 INSURANCE OFFICE - 12TH FLOOR - DAY

Neff, with his hat on and no briefcase, is walking toward Keyes' office. As he comes up close to the door, he stops with a startled expression on his face. On a chair beside the door sits a familiar figure. He is Jackson, the man from the observation platform of the train. He is wearing his Stetson hat and smoking a cigar. He is studying something in the file folder. Neff recognizes him immediately but Jackson does not look up. Neff controls his expression and goes on to open the door to Keyes' office.

NEFF'S VOICE
Monday morning there was a note on my desk that you wanted to see me, Keyes. For a minute I wondered if it could be about Lola. It was worse. Outside your door was the last guy in the world I wanted to see.

D-7 INT. KEYES' OFFICE

Neff is just closing the door from the inside. Keyes, his coat off, is lying on his office couch, chewing on a cigar, as usual.

KEYES: Come in. Come in, Walter. I want to ask you something. After all the years we've known each other, do you mind if I make a rather blunt statement?

NEFF: About what?

KEYES: About me. Walter, I'm a very great man. This Dietrichson business. It's murder, and murders don't come any neater. As fancy a piece of homicide as anybody ever ran into. Smart and tricky and almost perfect, but - -

Keyes bounces off the couch like a rubber ball.

KEYES: - - but, I think Papa has it all figured out, figured out and wrapped up in tissue paper with pink ribbons on it.

NEFF: I'm listening.

Keyes levels a finger at him.

KEYES: You know what? That guy Dietrichson was never on the train.

NEFF: He wasn't?

(Continued)

D-7 (Cont'd)

KEYES: No, he wasn't, Walter. Look, you can't be sure of killing a man by throwing him off a train that's going fifteen miles an hour. The only way you can be sure is to kill him first and then throw his body on the tracks. That would mean either killing him on the train, or -- and this is where it really gets fancy -- you kill him somewhere else and put him on the tracks. Two possibilities, and I personally buy the second.

NEFF: You're way ahead of me, Keyes.

KEYES: Look, it was like this. They killed the guy -- the wife and somebody else -- and then the somebody else took the crutches and went on the train as Dietrichson, and then the somebody else jumped off, and then they put the body on the tracks where the train had passed. An impersonation, see. And a cinch to work. Because it was night, very few people were about, they had the crutches to stare at, and they never really looked at the man at all.

NEFF: It's fancy all right, Keyes. Maybe it's a little too fancy.

KEYES: Is it? I tell you it fits together like a watch. And now let's see what we have in the way of proof. The only guy that really got a good look at this supposed Dietrichson is sitting right outside my office. I took the trouble to bring him down here from Oregon. Let's see what he has to say.

Keyes goes to the door and opens it.

KEYES: Come in, Mr. Jackson.

Jackson enters with the file folder.

JACKSON: Yes sir, Mr. Keyes. These are fine cigars you smoke.

He indicates the cigar he himself is smoking.

KEYES: Two for a quarter.

JACKSON: That's what I said.

(Continued)

D-7 (Cont'd)

KEYES: Never mind the cigar, Jackson. Did you study those photographs? What do you say?

JACKSON: Yes, indeed, I studied them thoroughly. Very thoroughly

KEYES: Well? Did you make up your mind?

JACKSON: Mr. Keyes, I'm a Medford man. Medford, Oregon. Up in Medford we take our time making up our minds --

KEYES: Well you're not in Medford now. I'm in a hurry. Let's have it.

Jackson indicates the file folder he is holding.

JACKSON: Are these photographs of the late Mr. Dietrichson?

KEYES: Yes.

JACKSON: Then my answer is no.

KEYES: What do you mean no?

JACKSON: I mean this is not the man that was on the train.

KEYES: Will you swear to that?

JACKSON: I'm a Medford man. Medford, Oregon. And if I say it, I mean it, and if I mean it, of course I'll swear it.

KEYES: Thank you.

Keyes turns to Neff.

KEYES: There you are, Walter. There's your proof.

Keyes remembers he forgot to introduce Jackson.

KEYES: Oh, Mr. Jackson, this is Mr. Neff, one of our salesmen.

JACKSON: Please to meet you, Mr. Neff. Pleased indeed.

NEFF: How do you do.

D-7 (Cont'd)

JACKSON: Very fine, thank you. Never was better.

KEYES: Mr. Jackson, how would you describe the man you saw on that observation platform?

JACKSON: Well, I'm pretty sure he was a younger man, about ten or fifteen years younger than the man in these photographs.

KEYES: Dietrichson was about fifty, wasn't he, Walter?

NEFF: Fifty-one, according to the policy.

JACKSON: The man I saw was nothing like fifty-one years old. Of course, it was pretty dark on that platform and, come to think of it, he tried to keep his back towards me. But I'm positive just the same.

KEYES: That's fine, Jackson. Now you understand this matter is strictly confidential. We may need you again down here in Los Angeles, if the case comes to court.

JACKSON: Any time you need me, I'm at your entire disposal, gentlemen. Expenses paid, of course.

Keyes picks up the telephone on his desk and speaks into it.

KEYES: Get me Lubin, in the cashier's office.

Meanwhile, Jackson crosses over to Neff and, during the ensuing dialogue between him and Neff, we hear Keyes' low voice on the phone in background. We do not hear what he says.

JACKSON: (To Neff)
Ever been in Medford, Mr. Neff?

NEFF: Never.

JACKSON: Wait a minute. Do you go trout fishing? Maybe I saw you up Klamath Falls way.

NEFF: Nope. Never fish.

JACKSON: Neff. Neff. I've got it! It's the name. There's a family of Neffs in Corvallis.

(Continued)

NEFF: No relation.

JACKSON: Let me see. This man's an automobile dealer in Corvallis. Very reputable man, too, I'm told.

Keyes rejoins them at this point.

KEYES: All right, Mr. Jackson. Suppose you go down to the cashier's office -- room twenty-seven on the eleventh floor. They'll take care of your expense account and your ticket for the train tonight.

JACKSON: Tonight? Tomorrow morning would suit me better. There's a very good osteopath down here I want to see before I leave.

Keyes has opened the door for Jackson.

KEYES: Okay, Mr. Jackson. Just don't put her on the expense account.

Jackson doesn't get it.

JACKSON: Goodbye, gentlemen. A pleasure.

He goes out.

KEYES: There it is, Walter. It's beginning to come apart at the seams already. A murder's never perfect. It always comes apart sooner or later. And when two people are involved it's usually sooner. We know the Dietrichson dame is in it, and somebody else. Pretty soon we're going to know who that somebody else is. He'll show. He's got to show. Sometime, somewhere, they've got to meet. Their emotions are all kicked up. Whether it's love or hate doesn't matter. They can't keep away from each other. They think it's twice as safe because there are two of them. But it's not twice as safe. It's ten times twice as dangerous. They've committed a murder and that's not like taking a trolley ride together where each one can get off at a different stop. They're stuck with each other. They've got to ride all the way to the end of the line. And it's a one-way trip, and the last stop is the cemetery.

(Continued)

D-7 (Cont'd)

He puts a cigar in his mouth and starts tapping his pockets for matches.

KEYES: (Continued)
She put in her claim and I'm going to throw it right back at her.
(Pats his pockets again)
Have you got one of those?

Neff strikes a match for him. Keyes takes the match out of his hand and lights his cigar.

KEYES: Let her sue us if she dares. I'll be ready for her -- and that somebody else. They'll be digging their own graves.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-8 TELEPHONE BOOTH IN JERRY'S MARKET - DAY

Neff is in the booth dialing a number, and as she waits he looks around to make sure he is not watched.

NEFF: (Into phone) Mrs. Dietrichson?... This is Jerry's market. We just got in a shipment of that English soap you were asking about. Will you be coming by this morning?... Thank you, Mrs. Dietrichson.

Neff hangs up.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-9 EXT. JERRY'S MARKET - DAY

The LaSalle stops in front of the market. Phyllis steps out and goes into the market, looking around.

D-10 SHELVES IN THE REAR OF MARKET

Neff is moving slowly along the shelves, outwardly calm but with his nerves on edge. From beyond him Phyllis approaches. She stops beside him, facing the same way, with a couple of feet separating them.

PHYLLIS: Hello, Walter.

NEFF: (In a harsh whisper) Come closer.

Phyllis moves close to him.

PHYLLIS: What's the matter?

NEFF: Everything's the matter. Keyes is rejecting your claim. He's sitting back with his mouth watering, waiting for you to sue. He wants you to sue. But you're not going to.

PHYLLIS: What's he got to stop me?

NEFF: He's got the goods. He's figured out how it was worked. He knows it was somebody else on the train. He's dug up a witness he thinks will prove it.

PHYLLIS: Prove it how? Listen, if he rejects that claim, I have to sue.

NEFF: Yeah? And then you're in court and a lot of other things are going to come up. Like, for instance, about you and the first Mrs. Dietrichson.

D-10 (Cont'd)

Phyllis looks at him sharply, sideways.

PHYLLIS: What about me and the first Mrs. Dietrichson?

NEFF: The way she died. And about that black hat you were trying on --- before you needed a black hat.

A customer comes along the aisle toward them. They move apart. The customer passes. Phyllis draws close again.

PHYLLIS: Walter, Lola's been telling you some of her cockeyed stories. She's been seeing you.

NEFF: I've been seeing her, if you want to know. So she won't yell her head off about what she knows.

PHYLLIS: Yes, she's been putting on an act for you, crying all over your shoulder, that lying little ---

NEFF: Keep her out of it. All I'm telling you is we're not going to sue.

PHYLLIS: Because you don't want the money any more, even if you could get it? Because she's made you feel like a heel all of sudden.

NEFF: It isn't the money any more. It's our necks now. We're pulling out, understand.

PHYLLIS: Because of what Keyes can do? You're not fooling me, Walter. It's because of Lola. What you did to her father. You can't take it that she might find out some day.

NEFF: I said, leave her out of it.

PHYLLIS: Walter, it's me I'm talking about. I don't want to be left out of it.

NEFF: Stop saying that. It's just that it hasn't worked out the way we wanted. We can't have the money. We can't go through with it, that's all.

D-10 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: We have gone through with it, Walter. The tough part is all behind us. We just have to hold on now and not go soft inside, and stick together, close, the way we started out.

Phyllis takes his arm, forgetting where she is. He pulls away.

NEFF: Watch it, will you. Someone's coming.

One of the market help, pushing a small hand-truck loaded with packaged goods, comes along the aisle. He stops and begins to restock a shelf very close to Neff and Phyllis. They go off slowly in opposite directions. CAMERA PANS with Neff as he walks toward another shelf, one that stands away from the wall. Phyllis appears on the opposite side of the shelf and stops, facing toward him. They now continue their low-voiced dialogue through the piled-up merchandise.

PHYLLIS: I loved you, Walter. And I hated him. But I wasn't going to do anything about it, not until I met you. It was you had the plan. I only wanted him dead.

NEFF: Yeah, and I was the one that fixed him so he was dead. Is that what you're telling me?

Phyllis takes off her dark glasses for the first time and looks at him with cold, hard eyes.

PHYLLIS: Yes. And nobody's pulling out. We went into it together, and we're coming out at the end together. It's straight down the line for both of us, remember.

Phyllis puts the glasses on again and goes.

Over Neff's face, as he looks after her, comes the COMMENTARY.

NEFF'S VOICE

Yeah. I remembered all right. Just as I remembered what you had told me, Keyes, about that trolley car ride and how there was no way to get off -- until the end of the line.

DISSOLVE:

D-11 INT. NEFF'S OFFICE - (NIGHT)

Neff is dictating into the dictaphone.

NEFF: Yeah, I remembered it all right. Just as I remembered what you had told me, Keyes, about that trolley car ride, and how there was no way to get off until the end of the line, where the cemetery was. And I got to thinking what cemeteries are for. They're to put dead people in, I guess that was the first time I ever thought about Phyllis that way. Dead, I mean, and how things would be if she was dead. Because the way it was now she had me by the throat. She could hang me higher than a kite any day she felt like it. And there was nothing I could do, except hold my breath and watch that day come closer and closer, and maybe pray a little, if I still knew how to pray... I saw Lola three or four times that week. I guess it sounds crazy, Keyes, after what I had done, but it was only with her that I could relax and let go a little. Then one night we drove up into the hills above Hollywood Bowl...

DISSOLVE TO:

D-12 HOLLYWOOD HILLS (NIGHT)(TRANSPARENCY)

Neff and Lola are climbing over a low hill in the foreground. The sky is starlit and music from the Bowl comes over the scene from below (Cesar Franck D Minor Symphony). As he helps her climb up, CAMERA PANS with them and shows the expanse of the Bowl below, a packed audience, and the orchestra on the lighted shell.

They sit down on the grass. Neff sits near her, not too close. It is very dark and they are silhouetted against the shell lights. Neff puts a cigarette in his mouth and strikes a match. The flame lights up Lola's face. Neff glances at her. She is crying. He lights his cigarette and blows out the match. A pause follows.

NEFF: Why are you crying?

Lola doesn't answer.

NEFF: You won't tell me?

D-12 (Cont'd)

LOLA: (In a choked voice)
Of course I will, Walter. I wouldn't tell anybody else but you. It's about Nino.

NEFF: Zachette? What about him?

LOLA: They killed my father together. He and Phyllis. He helped her do it. I know he did.

NEFF: What makes you say that?

LOLA: I've been following him. He's at her house, night after night. It was Phyllis and him all the time. Maybe he was going with me just for a blind. And the night of the murder --

NEFF: You promised not to talk that way any more.

LOLA: -- he was supposed to pick me up after a lecture at U.C.L.A. - but he never showed up. He said he was sick. Sick! He couldn't show up, because the train was leaving with my father on it.

She begins to cry again.

LOLA: Maybe I'm just crazy. Maybe it's all just in my mind.

NEFF: Sure, it's all in your mind.

LOLA: I only wish it was, Walter, because I still love him.

Over Neff's face, as he listens to the music, comes the commentary.

NEFF'S VOICE
Zachette. That's funny. Phyllis and Zachette. What was he doing up at her house? I couldn't figure that one out. I tried to make sense out of it and got nowhere. But the real brain-twister came the next day. You sprang it on me, Keyes, after office hours, when you caught me down in the lobby of the building.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-13 LOBBY OF PACIFIC BLDG. (DAY)

About 5:00 P.M. or a little later. A stream of office employees is coming out of an elevator; a second elevator reaches the lobby and some more office employees come out, among them Neff, wearing his hat and carrying his briefcase.

(Continued)

D-13 (Cont'd)

CAMERA PRECEDES HIM as he walks toward the entrance doors. He is stopped by Keyes' voice, off to one side.

KEYES' VOICE: Oh, Walter, just a minute.

Neff stops and looks towards the cigar counter, as he moves towards him. Keyes is standing there buying cigars. He is stuffing them into his pockets.

NEFF: Hello, Keyes.

KEYES: Hang onto your hat, Walter.

NEFF: What for?

KEYES: Nothing much. The Dietrichson case just busted wide open.

NEFF: How do you mean?

KEYES: The guy showed. That's how.

NEFF: The sombody else?

KEYES: Yeah. The guy that did it with her.

NEFF: No kidding?

KEYES: She's filed suit against us, and it's okay by me. When we get into that courtroom I'll tear them apart, both of them. Come on -- I'll buy you a martini.

NEFF: No thanks, Keyes.

KEYES: With two olives.

NEFF: I've got to get a shave and a shoe-shine. I've got a date.

KEYES: Margie. I still bet she drinks from the bottle.

He bites off the end of the cigar and puts the cigar into his mouth. He starts tapping his pockets for a match, as usual. Neff strikes a match for him.

NEFF: They give you matches when they sell you cigars, Keyes. All you have to do is ask for them.

D-13 (Cont'd)

KEYES: I don't like them. They always explode in my pockets. So long, Walter.

Keyes goes toward the street and OUT OF SCENE. Neff moves back into the lobby, CAMERA FOLLOWING HIM. As he reaches the elevator, he looks back over his shoulder, to make sure Keyes is gone, then steps into the empty elevator.

NEFF: (Entering elevator)
Twelve.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-14 ENTRANCE - OFFICE, 12TH FLOOR - RECEPTION ROOM (DAY)

Neff comes out of the elevator. The receptionist is just tidying up her desk. She has her hat on and is preparing to leave. Neff passes on through the swinging doors to the twelfth floor balcony.

D-15 12TH FLOOR BALCONY

Neff enters from the reception room. A couple of belated employees are leaving for the day. Neff goes towards Keyes' office, looks around to make sure he is unobserved, and enters.

D-16 KEYES' OFFICE (DAY)

Neff has just come in. He goes over to Keyes' desk and searches the papers on it. He tries the desk drawers and finds them locked. His eye falls on the dictaphone on the stand beside the desk. A record is on it, the needle is about two-thirds of the way towards the end. He lifts the needle and sets it back to the beginning of the record, sets the switch to play-back position. He lifts the arm off the bracket and starts the machine. Keyes' voice is heard coming from the horn:

KEYES' VOICE: (From dictaphone)
Memo to Mr. Norton. Confidential. Dietrichson File. With regard to your proposal to put Walter Neff under surveillance, I disagree absolutely. I have investigated his movements on the night of the crime, and he is definitely placed in his apartment from 7:15 P.M. on. In addition to this, I have known Neff intimately for eleven years, and I personally vouch for him, without reservation ....

D-16 (Cont'd)

Neff stops the machine. He sits down slowly, still holding the horn. He is deeply moved. After a moment, he presses the switch again.

KEYES' VOICE: (From dictaphone)
....Furthermore, no connection whatsoever has been established between Walter Neff and Mrs. Phyllis Dietrichson, whereas I am now able to report that such a connection has been established between her and another man. This man has been observed to visit the Dietrichson home on the night of July 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th. We have succeeded in identifying him as one Nino Zachette, former medical student, aged twenty-eight, residing at Lilac Court Apartments 1228½ N. La Brea Avenue. We have checked Zachette's movements on the night of the crime and have found that they cannot be accounted for. I am preparing a more detailed report for your consideration and it is my belief that we already have sufficient evidence against Zachette and Mrs. Dietrichson to justify police action. I strongly urge that this whole matter be turned over to the office of the District Attorney. Respectfully, Barton Keyes.

Neff sits, staring blankly at the wall. The cylinder goes on revolving, but no more voice comes - only the whir of the needle on the empty record. At last he remembers to replace the horn. He hangs it back on its hook. The machine stops. Neff gets up from the chair, walks slowly to the door and goes out.

D-17 12TH FLOOR, BALCONY

Neff has just come out of Keyes' office. He walks slowly back towards the reception room entrance, then stands there looking out through the glass doors. All the employees have now left. Neff is entirely alone. He moves as if to go out, then stops rigidly as his face lights up with excitement of a sudden idea. He turns quickly and walks on to his own office and enters.

D-18 NEFF'S OFFICE (DAY)

Neff walks across to his desk, lifts the telephone and dials a number. (During the ensuing telephone conversation, only what he says is heard. The pauses indicate speeches at the other end of the line).

D-18 (Cont'd)

NEFF: Phyllis? Walter. I've got to see you...Tonight...Yes, it has to be tonight...How's eleven o'clock? Don't worry about Keyes. He's satisfied...Leave the door on the latch and put the lights out. No, nobody's watching the house...I told you Keyes is satisfied. It's just for the neighbors...That's what I said. Yeah. Eleven o'clock. Goodbye, baby.

Neff hangs up and stands beside the desk with a grim expression on his face, takes a handkerchief out and wipes perspiration from his forehead and the palms of his hands. The gesture has a symbolic quality, as if he were trying to wipe away the murder. Over his face comes the commentary.

NEFF'S VOICE
I guess I don't have to tell you what I was going to do at eleven o'clock, Keyes. For the first time I saw a way to get clear of the whole mess I was in, and of Phyllis, too, all at the same time. Yeah, that's what I thought. But what I didn't know was that she was all set for me. That she had outsmarted me again, just like she always had...

DISSOLVE TO:

D-19 HALL STAIRWAY OF DIETRICHSON HOME (NIGHT)

The lights are turned on. Phyllis is coming down the stairs. She wears white lounging pajamas, and she is carrying something small and heavy concealed in a scarf in her right hand. She reaches the front door, opens it slightly, fixes the catch so that the door can be opened from outside. She switches off the porch light and the hall light. She moves towards the living room, where there is still light on.

She was all set and waiting for me. It could have been something in my voice when I called her up that tipped her off. And it could have been that she had the idea already. And an idea wasn't the only thing she had waiting for me.

D-20 LIVING ROOM

On the long table behind the davenport, one of the lamps is lit. The only other light in the room is a standing lamp beside the desk. A window toward the back is open, and through it comes the SOUNDS OF MUSIC, probably a neighboring radio.

Phyllis enters and crosses to the table. She puts out the lamp, then moves over to the desk and puts out the lamp there. The room is filled with bright moonlight coming in at the windows.

Phyllis crosses to the chair by the fireplace (the one she sat in the first time Neff came to the house). She lifts the loose cushion and puts what was in the scarf behind it. As she withdraws the scarf, there is a brief glint of something metallic before she covers the hidden object with the cushion again.

She turns to the low table in front of the davenport and takes a cigarette from the box. She takes a match and is about to strike it when, just then, she hears a car coming up the hill. She listens, motionless. The car stops. A car door is slammed.

Calmly, Phyllis strikes the match and lights her cigarette. She drops the match casually into a tray, goes back to the chair, sits down and waits, quietly smoking. There are footsteps outside the house.

Over the chair in which Phyllis is sitting, the hallway is visible through the arch. The front door opens. Neff comes in. He is silhouetted against the moonlight as he stands there. He closes the door again.

PHYLLIS: (In foreground)
In here, Walter.

Neff comes through the arch and walks slowly towards her.

NEFF: Hello, baby. Anybody else in the house?

PHYLLIS: Nobody. Why?

NEFF: What's that music?

PHYLLIS: A radio up the street.

Neff sits down on the arm of the davenport, close to her.

NEFF: Just like the first time I was here. We were talking about automobile insurance. Only you were thinking about murder. And I was thinking about that anklet.

D-20 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: And what are you thinking about now?

NEFF: I'm all through thinking. This is goodbye.

PHYLLIS: Goodbye? Where are you going?

NEFF: It's you that's going, baby. Not me. I'm getting off the trolley car right at this corner.

PHYLLIS: Suppose you stop being fancy. Let's have it, whatever it is.

NEFF: I have a friend who's got a funny theory. He says when two people commit a murder they're kind of on a trolley car, and one can't get off without the other. They're stuck with each other. They have to go on riding clear to the end of the line. And the last stop is the cemetery.

PHYLLIS: Maybe he's got something there.

NEFF: You bet he has. Two people are going to ride to the end of the line, all right. Only I'm not going to be one of them. I've got another guy to finish my ride for me.

PHYLLIS: So you've got it all arranged, Walter.

NEFF: You arranged it for me. I didn't have to do a thing.

PHYLLIS: Just who are you talking about?

NEFF: An acquaintance of yours. A Mr. Zachette. Come on, baby, I just got into this because I knew a little something about insurance, didn't I? I was just a sucker. I'd have been brushed-off as soon as you got your hands on the money.

PHYLLIS: What are you talking about?

NEFF: Save it. I'm telling this. It's been you and that Zachette guy all along, hasn't it?

D-20 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: That's not true.

NEFF: It doesn't make any difference whether it's true or not. The point is Keyes believes Zachette is the guy he's been looking for. He'll have him in that gas chamber before he knows what happened to him.

PHYLLIS: And what's happening to me all this time?

NEFF: Don't be silly. What do you expect to happen to you? You helped him do the murder, didn't you? That's what Keyes thinks. And what's good enough for Keyes is good enough for me.

PHYLLIS: Maybe it's not good enough for me, Walter. Maybe I don't go for the idea. Maybe I'd rather talk.

NEFF: Sometimes people are where they can't talk. Under six feet of dirt, for instance. And if it was you, they'd just charge it up to Zachette, wouldn't they. One more item on his account. Sure they would. That's just what they're going to do. Especially since he's coming here tonight...Oh, in about fifteen minutes from now, baby. With the cops right behind him. It's all taken care of.

PHYLLIS: And that'd make everything lovely for you, wouldn't it?

NEFF: Right. And it's got to be done before that suit of yours comes to trial, and Lola gets a chance to sound off, and they trip you up on the stand, and you start to fold up and drag me down with you.

PHYLLIS: Listen, Walter. Maybe I had Zachette here so they won't get a chance to trip me up. So we can get that money and be together.

NEFF: That's cute. Say it again.

D-20 (Cont'd)

PHYLLIS: He came here the first time just to ask where Lola was. I made him come back. I was working on him. He's crazy sort of guy, quick-tempered. I kept hammering into him that she was with another man, so he'd get into one of his jealous rages, and then I'd tell him where she was. And you know what he'd have done to her, don't you, Walter.

NEFF: Yeah, and for once I believe you. Because it's just rotten enough.

PHYLLIS: We're both rotten, Walter.

NEFF: Only you're just a little more rotten. You're rotten clear through. You got me to take care of your husband, and then you got Zachette to take care of Lola, and maybe take care of me too, and then somebody else would have come along to take care of Zachette for you. That's the way you operate isn't it, baby.

PHYLLIS: Suppose it is, Walter. Is what you've cooked up for tonight any better?

Neff gets up from the davenport. He listens to the music for a moment.

NEFF: I don't like this music anymore. It's too close. Do you mind if I shut the window?

Phyllis just stares at him. He goes quietly over to the window and shuts it and draws the curtain. Phyllis speaks to his back:

PHYLLIS: (Her voice low and urgent)
Walter!

Neff turns, something changes in his face. There is the report of a gun. He stands motionless for a moment, then very slowly starts towards her. CAMERA IS SHOOTING OVER HIS SHOULDER at Phyllis as she stands with the gun in her hand. Neff stops after he has taken a few steps.

NEFF: What's the matter? Why don't you shoot again? Maybe if I came a little closer?

D-20 (Cont'd)

Neff takes a few more steps towards her and stops again.

NEFF: How's that. Do you think you can do it now?

Phyllis is silent. She doesn't shoot. Her expression is tortured. Neff goes on until he is close to her. Quietly he takes the gun out of her unresisting hand.

NEFF: Why didn't you shoot, baby?

Phyllis puts her arms around him in complete surrender.

NEFF: Don't tell me it's because you've been in love with me all this time.

PHYLLIS: No. I never loved you, Walter. Not you, or anybody else. I'm rotten to the heart. I used you, just as you said. That's all you ever meant to me -- until a minute ago. I didn't think anything like that could ever happen to me.

NEFF: I'm sorry, baby. I'm not buying.

PHYLLIS: I'm not asking you to buy. Just hold me close.

Neff draws her close to him. She reaches up to his face and kisses him on the lips. As she comes out of the kiss there is realization in her eyes that this is the final moment.

NEFF: Goodbye, baby.

Out of the shot the gun explodes once, twice. Phyllis quivers in his arms. Her eyes fill with tears. Her head falls limp against his shoulder. Slowly he lifts her and carries her to the davenport. He lays her down on it carefully, almost tenderly. The moonlight coming in at the French doors shines on the anklet. He looks at it for the last time and slowly turns away. As he does so, he puts his hand inside his coat and it comes out with blood on it. Only then is it apparent that Phyllis' shot actually did hit him. He looks at the blood on his fingers with a dazed expression and quickly goes out of the room, the way he came.

D-21 EXT. DIETRICHSON HOME - (NIGHT)

Neff comes out of the house. He closes the front door with his right hand. His left arm hangs limp. He takes a few steps down the walk, then suddenly hears somebody approaching. He moves behind the palm tree near the walk.

(Continued)

D-21 (Cont'd)

A man comes up the steps towards the front door - Zachette. Just as he reaches the door, Neff calls to him.

NEFF: Hey you. Come here a minute. I said come here, Zachette.

Zachette turns and approaches him slowly.

NEFF: The name is Neff.

ZACHETTE: Yeah? And I still don't like it. What do you want?

NEFF: Look, kid, I want to give you a present.

He takes some loose change out of his pocket and holds out a coin.

NEFF: Here's a nice new nickel.

ZACHETTE: What's the gag?

NEFF: Suppose you go back down the hill to a drug store and make a phone call.

Neff starts to drop the nickel into Zachette's handkerchief pocket. Zachette knocks his hand away.

ZACHETTE: Keep your nickel and buy yourself an ice cream cone.

NEFF: The number is Granite 0386. Ask for Miss Dietrichson. The first name is Lola.

ZACHETTE: Lola? She isn't worth a nickel. And if I ever talk to her, it's not going to be over any telephone.

NEFF: Tough, aren't you? Take the nickel. Take it and call her. She wants you to.

ZACHETTE: Yeah? She doesn't want any part of me.

NEFF: I know who told you that, and it's not true. She's in love with you. Always has been. Don't ask me why. I couldn't even guess.

D-21 (Cont'd)

Zachette just stares at him. Neff moves again to put the nickel into Zachette's pocket. This time Zachette allows him to do it.

NEFF: Now beat it. Granite 0386, I told you.

He motions toward the street below.

NEFF: That way.

Zachette goes slowly past him. Neff grabs him and pushes him almost violently down the walk. Zachette goes out of shot. The sound of his steps dies away as Neff looks after him. Then, far off in the distance, the SIREN OF A POLICE CAR is heard.

Neff moves off through the shrubbery toward the side of the house where he parked his car.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-22 NEFF'S OFFICE - (NIGHT)

The desk lamp is still lighted. Outside the windows, the dawn is slowly breaking.

Neff is still clutching the horn of the dictaphone. There are eight or nine used cylinders on the desk beside him. A widening stain of blood shows on the left shoulder of his gray jacket. He is very weak by now, and his voice holds a note of utter exhaustion.

NEFF: It's almost four-thirty now, Keyes. It's cold. I wonder if she's still lying there alone in that house, or whether they've found her by now. I wonder a lot of things, but they don't matter any more, except I want to ask you to do me a favor. I want you to be the one to tell Lola, kind of gently, before it breaks wide open... Yes, and I'd like you to look after her and that guy Zachette, so he doesn't get pushed around too much. Because . . .

Suddenly he stops his dictation with an instinctive feeling that he is not alone in the room.

As he turns in his chair the CAMERA PULLS BACK slowly. The office door is wide open. Keyes is standing a few steps inside it. Behind him, on the balcony outside, stands the night watchman and the colored janitor, peering curiously into the room over Keyes' shoulder.

D-22 (Cont'd)

Slowly, and without taking his eyes off Neff's face, Keyes reaches back and pushes the door shut.

Neff hangs up the dictaphone horn. He looks at Keyes with a faint, tired grin and speaks very slowly.

NEFF: Hello, Keyes.

Keyes moves towards him a few steps and stands without answering.

NEFF: Up pretty early, aren't you? I always wondered what time you got down to work.

Keyes, staring at him, still does not answer.

NEFF: Or did your little man pull you out of bed?

KEYES: The janitor did. Seems you leaked a little blood on the way in here.

NEFF: Wouldn't be surprised.

Neff makes a motion indicating the used cylinders standing on the desk.

NEFF: I wanted to straighten out that Dietrichson story for you.

KEYES: So I gather.

NEFF: How long have you been standing there?

KEYES: Long enough.

NEFF: Kind of a crazy story with a crazy twist to it. One you didn't quite figure out.

KEYES: You can't figure them all, Walter.

NEFF: That's right. You can't, can you? And now I suppose I get the big speech, the one with all the two-dollar words in it. Let's have it, Keyes.

KEYES: You're all washed up, Walter.

NEFF: Thanks, Keyes. That was short anyway.

They stare at each other for a long moment, then, with intense effort Neff gets up on his feet and stands there swaying a little. His face is covered with sweat. His shoulder is bleeding. He is on the verge of collapse.

D-22 (Cont'd)

KEYES: Walter, I'm going to call a doctor.

NEFF: (Bitterly)
What for? So they can patch me up? So they can nurse me along till I'm back on my feet? So I can walk under my own power into that gas chamber up in San Quentin? Is that it, Keyes?

KEYES: Something like that, Walter.

NEFF: Well, I've got a different idea. Look here. Suppose you went back to bed and didn't find these cylinders till tomorrow morning, when the office opens. From then on you can play it any way you like. Would you do that much for me, Keyes?

KEYES: Give me one good reason.

NEFF: I need four hours to get where I'm going.

KEYES: You're not going anywhere, Walter.

NEFF: You bet I am. I'm going across the border.

KEYES: You haven't got a chance.

NEFF: Good enough to try for.

KEYES: You'll never make the border.

NEFF: That's what you think. Watch me.

Neff starts to move towards the door, staggering a little, holding himself upright with great effort.

KEYES: (In a voice of stony calm)
You'll never even make the elevator.

Neff has reached the door. He twists the knob and drags the door open. He turns in it to look back at Keyes' implacable face.

NEFF: So long, Keyes.

Neff goes out, leaving the door wide open. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS his staggering walk along the BALCONY TOWARDS THE ELEVATOR LOBBY. The sound of his breathing is so harsh

D-22 (Cont'd)

and loud that for a moment it dominates the scene. Finally he reaches the swing doors leading into the lobby and starts to push them open. At this moment he collapses. He clutches the edge of the door and as it swings around with him he falls to the floor. He tries to struggle up but cannot rise.

In background comes the sound of a telephone being dialed.

KEYES' VOICE: Hello ... Send an ambulance to the Pacific Building on Olive Street ... Yeah ... It's a police job.

There is the sound of the phone being replaced in its cradle. Then there are footsteps growing louder along the balcony and Keyes walks slowly into the shot. He kneels down beside Neff.

KEYES: How you doing, Walter?

Neff manages a faint smile.

NEFF: I'm fine. Only somebody moved the elevator a couple of miles away.

D-22 (Cont'd)

KEYES: They're on the way.

NEFF: (Slowly and with great difficulty) You know why you didn't figure this one, Keyes? Let me tell you. The guy you were looking for was too close. He was right across the desk from you.

KEYES: Closer than that, Walter.

The eyes of the two men meet in a moment of silence.

NEFF: I love you too.

Neff fumbles for the handkerchief in Keyes' pocket, pulls it out and clumsily wipes his face with it. The handkerchief drops from his hand. He gets a loose cigarette out of his pocket and puts it between his lips. Then with great difficulty he gets out a match, tries to strike it, but is too weak. Keyes takes the match out of his hand, strikes it for him and lights his cigarette.

FADE OUT

THE END

(See following pages for alternate ending)

D-22 (Cont'd)

KEYES: They're on the way.

NEFF: (Slowly and with great difficulty) You know why you didn't figure this one, Keyes? Let me tell you. The guy you were looking for was too close. He was right across the desk from you.

KEYES: Closer than that, Walter.

The eyes of the two men meet in a moment of silence.

NEFF: I love you too.

Neff fumbles for the handkerchief in Keyes' pocket, pulls it out and clumsily wipes his face with it. Then, clutching the handkerchief against his shoulder, he speaks to Keyes for the last time.

NEFF: At the end of that...trolley line... just as I get off...you be there... to say goodbye...will you, Keyes?

FADE OUT

END OF SEQUENCE "D"

SEQUENCE "E"

FADE IN:

E-1 WITNESS ROOM IN DEATH CHAMBER - SAN QUENTIN (DAY)

Showing the witness room and approximately one-half of the gas chamber. BOOM SHOT towards guard standing BACK TO CAMERA at entrance door. Except for this guard the room is empty.

Guard opens the door. Two other guards enter, followed by a group of witnesses and newspaper men, each of whom removes his hat as he enters the room. They form a group around the outside of the gas chamber, some looking in through the glass windows, some standing in the background on low platforms against the wall.

THE CAMERA SLOWLY BEGINS TO MOVE IN AND DOWN, AND CENTERS ON Keyes, as he enters the room and stands behind the door. His face is seen through the bars of the door, which is then closed, and CAMERA MOVES TO A CLOSEUP. His eyes follow the action of the closing door, then slowly look towards the gas chamber.

E-2 THE GAS CHAMBER, EMPTY

On its windows show reflections of the spectators, including the face of Keyes.

The door to the gas chamber opens in the background, and beyond that another door opens. Neff comes in between two guards. He is wearing a white open-necked shirt, blue denim pants, and walks barefooted on a cocoanut matting. He moves into the gas chamber, looks through the windows in the direction of Keyes and nods quickly, recognizing him. The guards turn him around and seat him in one of the two metal chairs, with his back to the witnesses. They strap his arms, legs and body to the chair. The guards go out.

E-3 THE DOOR TO THE GAS CHAMBER

It is open. The three guards come out of the gas chamber into the ante-chamber, where stand the warden, executioner, two doctors, the minister and the acid man, and possibly several guards.

The executioner and one guard close the door. The guard spins the big wheel which tightens it. The wheel at first turns very quickly, then, as it tightens, the guard uses considerable force to seal the chamber tight. The guard steps out of the shot. The gas chamber is now sealed.

E-4 THE WITNESSES AND KEYES

They are intently watching Neff in the gas chamber.

E-5 THE ANTE-CHAMBER

The warden looks slowly around the room, sees that everyone is in his proper place and that the stethoscope, which one doctor holds, is connected with the outlet in the wall of the gas chamber. Also that the man in charge of the acid is ready. The warden makes a motion to the acid man. The acid man releases the mixed acid into a pipe connecting with a countersunk receptacle under Neff's chair. (This action is only suggested). The warden looks at the clock, then turns to the executioner and nods.

E-6 THE EXECUTIONER - MED. SHOT - CAMERA SHOOTING DOWN FROM HIGH ANGLE TOWARDS EXECUTIONER

He pushes a metal lever. (This immerses the pellets of cyanide in the acid under the chair.)

E-7 INT. GAS CHAMBER - MED. SHOT

CAMERA IS SHOOTING ABOVE Neff's head (just out of shot), towards spectators standing outside the gas chamber, Keyes in the center. Gas floats up into scene between CAMERA and spectators. Keyes, unable to watch, looks away.

E-8 THE FIRST DOCTOR - CLOSE SHOT

as he listens on stethoscope connected with the gas chamber. He glances at the clock above his head.

E-9 THE SECOND DOCTOR - CLOSE SHOT

He stands to right of the gas chamber door, taking notes on a pad. He glances towards First Doctor (out of scene) and looks through venetian blinds into the gas chamber. The acid man stands near him.

E-10 THE FIRST DOCTOR -

CAMERA SHOOTING FROM HIGH ANGLE TOWARDS HIM as he listens on stethoscope. The doctor glances at the clock again. He takes his stethoscope from his ears. He nods to the warden. This indicates that the man is dead. CAMERA PANS with warden as he turns to open the door connecting the ante-chamber with the witness room.

E-11 THE WITNESS ROOM - LONG SHOT FROM HIGH ON BOOM DOWN ON WITNESSES GROUPED AROUND GAS CHAMBER

The door connecting with the ante-chamber opens. A guard comes through.

GUARD: That's all, gentlemen. Vacate the chamber, please.

E-11 (Cont'd)

The guard withdraws and closes the door by which he entered. The witnesses slowly start to file out. A guard has opened the outer door. The witnesses put their hats on as they pass through. A few go close to the windows of the gas chamber to look in at the dead man before they leave.

All the witnesses have now left, except Keyes, who stands, shocked and tragic, beyond the door. The guard goes to him and touches his arm, indicating to him that he must leave. Keyes glances for the last time towards the gas chamber and slowly moves to go out.

E-12 CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE DEATH CHAMBER

CAMERA SHOOTING IN THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR AT KEYES, who is just turning to leave. Keyes comes slowly out into the dark, narrow corridor. His hat is on his head now, his overcoat is pulled around him loosely. He walks like an old man. He takes eight or ten steps, then mechanically reaches a cigar out of his vest pocket and puts it in his mouth. His hands, in the now familiar gesture, begin to pat his pockets for matches.

Suddenly he stops, with a look of horror on his face. He stands rigid, pressing a hand against his heart. He takes the cigar out of his mouth and goes slowly on towards the door, CAMERA PANNING with him. When he has almost reached the door, the guard stationed there throws it wide, and a blaze of sunlight comes in from the prison yard outside.

Keyes slowly walks out into the sunshine, stiffly, his head bent, a forlorn and lonely man.

FADE OUT

THE END